ZARAFA UNFOLDING
SP/N GALLERY
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS JAN. 14 - FEB. 15, 2020 Opening Reception Jan. 17 6:30 - 9:30PM

FEATURED ARTIST

SHAFAQ AHMAD, AYMAN ALAMOUDI, AMEER ALWAN, MAEDEH ASGHARPOUR*
MARYAM BAIG*, SARA BAWANY, SIMEEN FARHAT, MARJANEH GOUADARZI*,
NILOO JALILVAND*, MONA KASRA*, POORAN LASHINI, GORAN MARIC,
ADNAN RAZVI*, AQSA SHAKIL*, FAHIMEH VAHDAT, NOOR WADI, ATIF AKIN,
DILEK WINCHESTER, JIN-YA HUANG*-BREAK BREAD BREAK BORDERS

* UTD ALUMNI

CURATOR GREG METZ

PANEL DISCUSSION: JAN. 18, 2020 1:00-3:00 SP/N GALLERY
A MEETING IN THE FIELD, MIGRATING ART AND IDEAS BEYOND A SINGULAR DOMAIN
Out beyond ideas
of wrongdoing and right doing,
there is a field.
I will meet you there. #NMB
SPECIAL VISITING ARTIST LECTURE ATIF
AKIN: APRICOTS FROM DAMASCUS  FEB. 12, 2020
7:00- 9:00 SP/N GALLERY

Sponsored by the School of Arts and Humanities The University of Texas at Dallas
SP/N Gallery 3020 Stewart Dr. Richardson, TX 75080

All Events are free & open to the public
CURATOR STATEMENT:
ZARIFA UNFOLDING
Greg Metz

Admittedly, I am probably not the most credible authority on making a statement on Middle Eastern/South Asian Contemporary Art, especially as it applies to these artists from the diaspora now working within our geophysical locale. That is also not my motivation for doing this exhibition unless that statement is to recognize the breadth of talent and interests of these creatives in finding and demonstrating their diversity of voices reflective of their histories and connections to homelands of origin as they attempt to adapt to new domains. I have found no coined stereotype as one might suspect, but rather individual charges attempting to establish a criteria for personal expression that seeks the embodiment of query and statute that links to a greater sense of our collective humanity.

My choices of the inclusion of artists have been mostly* based on my personal connection to these artists (many successful UTD alumni and art colleagues) whom I have found to be credible witnesses to this sensibility, relative to these challenging social political times and with an established, dedicated pursuit of their craft. The works speak for themselves as with all good art. They are complex, experimental, expressive, searching, reflective, mystical and challenging, but always from the well of the heart and senses, and the windings of the intellect. Need I say more... Experience all this as you will, and as these works and performances demand.

*The exception being the discovery of Atif and Dilek’s ‘Apricots from Damascus’ installation (originally exhibited in part at the SALT Galata in Istanbul, Turkey 2015/16) is one exception- it has served as a comparable, regional (Middle Eastern) model of artists’ expressions representing various accounts of the exiled, refugee, immigrant experience/ reflections.

‘Zarafa’ is the Arabic word for ‘charming’ or ‘lovely one’. It is also the phonetic word for the strange exotic African creature- the ‘giraffe’, which was famously marched to Paris as a diplomatic gesture from the Ottoman Empire, 1825, to curry political favor with the European theater then centered in Paris. What became of Zarafa- an exotic curiosity exiled from its homeland to a foreign country so different than its own- was a lesson in spectacle, adaptation and survival. ‘Zarafa Unfolding’ implies a similar experience equated to that of many refugees, immigrants and exiles that have found themselves longing for home while faced with assimilation into a new and challenging cultural dynamic. How that experience ‘unfolds’ is somewhat reflected in the events happening in the gallery.
Is an exhibition of art works, installations and performances exploring the cultural complexities of issues and identities of creatives coming from Middle Eastern/ South Asian descent. Most are artists who have connected with Dallas at one time or another, making contributions which have helped define this city and beyond as more globally dynamic. Their work represents a diversity of situations, perspectives, mediums and actions through their individual efforts to define themselves as creative agents within colliding cultures—while also confronting differences within their own cultures.

***Special Thanks to Dean Roemer and Associate Dean Michele Hanlon of the School of Arts and Humanities for their programming support and to Brian Scott, Joshua Moran & the gallery staff for their dedicated facilitation of this exhibition.***

The University of Texas at Dallas’ SP/N Gallery serves as the university’s main gallery venue, providing both a laboratory and forum for creative research and engaged dialogue into contemporary art practices. The exhibition programming seeks to aesthetically enrich the university students, faculty and its surrounding community interests by the sharing of challenging issues and ideas, innovative propositions, critical theory and observations reflective of creative contemporary culture within its historical context.

It is sponsored by The University of Texas at Dallas

SP/N Gallery is located at 3020 Steward Dr. Richardson, TX 75080
https://www.utdallas.edu/ah/events/detail.html?id=1220453801
Shafaq Ahmad was born in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. After she left Pakistan Ahmad lived in the United Kingdom, Iran and Denmark before settling down in the United States. She earned a BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University and an MFA degree from Texas Christian University. She designed art glass for Barovier and Toso Czech Republic for 8 years. She works as a multimedia artist using photography, painting, printmaking, sculpture, digital images and mixed media installation works. She has participated in many solo and over 70 group exhibitions in the USA, United Kingdom, Pakistan, Japan, Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, Italy and United Arab Emirates. Her work is a part of permanent collections at the Sharjah Department of Art and Culture in the United Arab Emirates, Museum of Geo-metric and Madi Art in Dallas, Texas, Mercedes Benz Daimler Financial, Corporate Headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas. www.shafaqahmad.com
The act of creating serves as contemplative process through which I attempt to show the connection of the universal spirit of all living beings. I focus and am absorbed in the meditative act of creating with different media. The experience of being embraced by the universal spirit is expressed through luminosity of color and light, movement through gesture, richness through layering of color, and depth through intertwining mark making. The element of geometric shapes coming through manifests beauty through balance and harmony. The calligraphic mark with a sense of forever being repeated represents the infinite consciousness. The movement and the energy of the calligraphic marks show the constant state of flux of each thing.

**ARTIST STATEMENT:**

*Parallel Universes* 102 x 78 Acrylic on Canvas 2019
Ayman Alamoudi was born in Medina, Saudi Arabia. After completing his work at the Taibah High School, Medina, Saudi Arabia in 1993, he entered King Abdul-Aziz University in Medina, Saudi Arabia. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in art from King Abdul-Aziz University in December of 1997. During the following three years, he worked as an artist and teacher in the Medina area. In 2000, he was a Teaching Assistant in the art department of King Abdul-Aziz University. In January 2003, he entered the graduate school of Pittsburg State University at Pittsburg, Kansas and soon earned a master's degree in art. In 2010, he received a doctoral degree from The University of Texas at Dallas and earned a Ph.D. in Aesthetic Studies of Art and Technology and worked as Assistant Professor of Art at Taibah University until 2014. Alamoudi now teaches at The University of North Texas at Dallas. and his academic research and artwork interweave visual, digital and interactive media with socio-cultural conflicts, differences, and contradictions.
The Allure of Fear’ is magnifying acts through, images, sounds and touch into the function of threat that one might recognize and feel from within. Assailant Blur, Echo of Mortality and Sacred Touch; are threads of time, nostalgic memories to question the uncertainty and an attempt to reset challenges and conflicts of insufficient cultural values. Assailant Blur, a blurry organic moving image changes into a detailed scene of the real public slaying. It is visual rhetoric of cultural aggression that relies on the abstraction of actions and bodies. The blur as a sublime gesture of a threat, more than an actual threat. It plays an identity game in which the viewer is implicated by viewing and hearing the presence of death. It is likely to implicate sympathetic identification in the viewer.

**AYMAN ALAMOUDI**

**ARTIST STATEMENT:**

*Assailant Blur,* video projection with sound, 2019
Abdul Ameer Alwan, 1955-2014  Born in Baghdad, Iraq, ‘Ameer’, to those who knew him, was a celebrated mid-career artist/painter in his native Iraq before the Iraqi invasion in 2003. His work was acquired by many Iraqi collectors and could be found in the Iraqi Museum of Modern Art and shown at United Nation events. He was shown in galleries in Baghdad, Amman and then Jordan where he sought refuge when the war shut down the galleries and social events in Iraq. He eventually sought asylum from the war, immigrating to Dallas 2007, after 4 years in Jordan. Most of his work remains in Iraq, if they survived at all?  Encountering language barriers, isolation and a very different art market were enormous challenges. Being displaced from one’s family, homeland and seeing one’s country in war torn disarray can be overwhelming in the quest for new hope and a new life. While enduring this ‘post-traumatic stress’ coupled with the dynamics of transitional survival, Ameer’s work confronts us with a vivid visual translation of his family’s disruptive, personal journey. Recognition of such events and the longing memories are poetic and terse reflections that speak to the experiences of many who were dislodged from their homeland by this war with no apparent end.

‘Exodus’ Oil on canvas  36” x 46”  Ameer Alwan

ABDUL AMEER ALWAN

BIOGRAPHY:
Abdul Ameer Alwan, 1955-2014  Born in Baghdad, Iraq, ‘Ameer’, to those who knew him, was a celebrated mid-career artist/painter in his native Iraq before the Iraqi invasion in 2003. His work was acquired by many Iraqi collectors and could be found in the Iraqi Museum of Modern Art and shown at United Nation events. He was shown in galleries in Baghdad, Amman and then Jordan where he sought refuge when the war shut down the galleries and social events in Iraq. He eventually sought asylum from the war, immigrating to Dallas 2007, after 4 years in Jordan. Most of his work remains in Iraq, if they survived at all?  Encountering language barriers, isolation and a very different art market were enormous challenges. Being displaced from one’s family, homeland and seeing one’s country in war torn disarray can be overwhelming in the quest for new hope and a new life. While enduring this ‘post-traumatic stress’ coupled with the dynamics of transitional survival, Ameer’s work confronts us with a vivid visual translation of his family’s disruptive, personal journey. Recognition of such events and the longing memories are poetic and terse reflections that speak to the experiences of many who were dislodged from their homeland by this war with no apparent end.
Director Ramtin Nikzad captured Ameer’s attempt to adapt in this beautiful but longing film documentary short ‘This Is Our House’ 2011.

‘A renowned Iraqi painter, displaced by war, longs for his past while his young daughter carries only a fading memory of her birthplace. His daughter born just weeks before the 2003 invasion has spent most of her life outside Iraq and retains only the faintest understanding of her country of birth. The film explores a relationship between a father and a daughter through the themes of memory, culture, identity and displacement. 

http://www.newmediarecordings.com/this-is-our-house-2011

Ramtin Nikzad’s film work has been commissioned by the New York Times, and screened at film festivals and venues around the world, including the London International Documentary Film Festival and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Ramtin Nikzad is cofounder of Fortress Presents, the creative agency behind the annual Fortress Festival produced in partnership with the Modern Museum of Fort Worth. It has received raved reviews by. Harper’s Bazaar, People Magazine, and USA Today as among the best music festivals in North America.
Maedeh Asgharpour is a visual artist, illustrator, and graphic designer. She was born in Guilan, Iran. She holds a Master of Art in Graphic Design from University of Tehran. She has illustrated children’s books and magazines and her works were published in Graphic Wood Book by Rasm publication. She has also taught Illustration at University of Guilan. She moved to Texas in 2018 and currently is an MFA student at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD). Her works have been featured and won awards at Iranian and international festivals and exhibitions. - Her work was selected as one of the top 10 finalists in “The IV International Skylight Prize illustration, SkyLight 2017”, in Colombia.
My work is a collection of illustrations that display my thoughts to the world. I illustrate my writings to speak about the importance of being female through the imagery I have created with the desire to challenge the audience's thinking. Recently I began combining my writings alongside the visual images. These written words are poetic in style, revealing small and big events of my life, seen through the female gaze. Most of the writings are inspired by what I have experienced after leaving my country and living a different life in a new environment.
BIOGRAPHY:

Born and raised in Pakistan, Baig received a B.A in Political Science and English Literature from University of Punjab, and a B.A in Art and Performance along with an MFA in Arts and Technology at UT Dallas. While her artistic endeavors span across several fields, her focus is on Gesture, Memory and Performance in Storytelling. As an actor, Baig has been seen as The Fool in Dallas Shakespeare’s King Lear. Selected works include Sheherzad in Arabian Nights at Dallas Museum of Art, Clio in the world premiere of On The Eve at Theatre Three, Pakeeza in Suburbia with Upstart Productions, Servant Girl in The Old Woman in the Woods with The Drama Club, Varvara in The Black Monk at Undermain, Puck in Midsummer Night's Dream and Nina in The Seagull at UT Dallas. Baig has performed her essays and stories at Ignite DFW, The Naked Stage and Margo Jones Theatre and her play, Jo Chaho Tum (loosely adapted from a 16th century Urdu poem Masnavi Sehar Ul Bay’aan), received its premiere in October 2016, funded by the City of Dallas, Office of Cultural Affairs. Baig lives works and creates in Dallas where she is a co-founding artistic associate of The Drama Club and is on the Advisory Board for Deep Vellum Publishing and Artistic Advisory Board for Theater Three. She is currently Marketing and Special Events Coordinator for Human Rights Initiative of North Texas. She Teaches in UTD's Arts and Performance program where she is a Distinguished Alumni.
I am made up of Memory: I read this the day the sky was mango sweet; I wore that when the universe crumbled my heart.

I am made of Before and After: I saw that film before I moved to America; I ate at that restaurant after Baba passed away.

I am made of Song: this was playing on the radio when Ami made chicken corn soup in 1982; that is the song I hum when I am not thinking.

I am made of Time: the time it takes to fly between Dallas and Karachi; the time required for an effective shame-nap; the time it was when the Moon entered the house of Cancer that night.

I am made of Transit: Pakistani students need an airside transit visa to even step onto De Gaulle airport in 2003; his jaundice will transit into a text book coma; my days are mere transits as I wait to connect to my two homes - Karachi & Dallas!

#noregrets #whoami #whoareyou #immigrant #home #whereishome #wherethouartthatishome #memory #before #after #songs #time #transit #dallas #karachi #travel #readyornot
SARA BAWANY

BIography:

Sara began writing poetry when she was first exposed to it at an early age at school. She found inspiration among teachers and modern poets alike, particularly women of color. She began her artistic journey with an interest in concrete poetry, moving into structured poetry before identifying as a free-verse poet. She began dabbling in spoken word poetry in late 2015 and has performed both spoken word and book readings throughout the DFW metroplex and the country, including two TEDx performances. Her work has also been featured in Brown Girl Magazine, Muslim Youth Musings, CAIR-Austin, and Voyage Dallas Magazine. Her Daybreak Press award-winning book, (W)holehearted: A Collection of Poetry and Prose (2018), embodies themes of femininity, spirituality, mental health, domestic violence, identity and relationships.
NOOR WADI

BIOGRAPHY:

Noor Wadi is a Palestinian, Muslim poet whose works address her roots in revolution and under political oppression. She performs her poetry all over Texas and won UT Dallas Underground Poetry Circus Champion in 2014. Noor was honored to have the opportunity to take her work to Chicago for CUPSI 2017 as a part of the UT Slam Poetry Team: Spitshine. She is a graduate of the University of Texas School of Law & an associate at an international law firm based in Dallas.
Simeen Farhat was born in Karachi, Pakistan. Some of her major solo shows include all over in the US, Europe, Middle East and South Asia. Collateral events exhibition at the 56th Venice Biennale, 2017 and will be exhibiting at the Contemporary Calligraphy Biennale at the Sharjah Museum of Contemporary Art and Karachi Biennale, 2019. Major Museums shows include: Asia Society, Houston Museum, King Abdul Aziz Center for World Culture, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Arlington Museum of Art, TX Biennale, 2009, Sharjah Museum, National Art Gallery, Islamabad. She has been mentioned and written about in major publications such as: NY Times, Elephant Magazine, Selection Magazine, Voteragent, Contemporary Practices, Philadelphia Inquirer, Dallas Morning News, Dallas Observer, Art and Seek, Artlies, Art and Culture, Houston Chronicle The Daily Dawn, Nuqta Art Magazine, Geo News, Canvas Magazine, Harpers' Bazar, Khaleejinesqe, and Kuwait, India Times, India Today, India Art Journal, Glasstire, TX. Major prestigious collections include: Facebook head office Dubua, One Eleven Congress Ave, Aramco Houston head office, Abu Dhabi Palace, Rotana Hotel, and Four Seasons Hotel, Dubai, UAE. King Abdul Center for World Culture (Ithra Museum), KPMG, Dallas, US Embassies, Islamabad and Jeddah, US, Tudor Pickering Holt and Co, Houston, TX, Peninsula Hotel, France. She has been invited for artist residencies in UK, Switzerland, and the US. Simeen Farhat received her MFA from TCU, Ft. Worth in 2000 and her BFA from ASU, Tempe, AZ in 1998.
Visual works of art, for me, become more engaging when there is an allusiveness along with congruity and analogy; like many great literary pieces (that I always find fascinating and inspiring). Any good form of art, I believe, should be subjective and open for a dialogue within and outside - which is how I relate my visual compositions of signs and symbols that inspires me. I reconstruct human forms - and many others - to create a universal language. As a visual artist, I do not adheret to the rules of any language; my intention is to reconstruct metaphorical ambiguities to create broken narratives. In the last decade, I was communication my thought processes using shapes of words as speech bubbles. In my newer work however, the body speaks for itself. Thus, it is now the language of the soul ruminating through the human forms. The mind becomes its grammar.
Born in Iran, Marjenah Goudarzi studied dentistry at the University of Shiraz Medical Science. Then serving as Professor of Oral Medicine (1991–2006) at the Shiraz Dental School. In 2010, she immigrated to the U.S. where she achieved her first solo painting exhibition in 2014. She has taught painting and participated in numerous exhibitions between 2013 and 2018. She entered the Univ. of Texas at Dallas’ E.O.D.I.A.H. Master’s Program in art history in 2018. This culminated in her solo show Fall 2019, In The Hands of Paint curated by Prof. John Pomara and her Master’s thesis Ludicrous Irony: What the Masks of Grace Hartigan’s Grand Street Brides Both Reveal and Conceal.
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Niloo Jalilvand is an Iranian-American artist, mathematician, educator, and activist. Her work has been featured at the Dallas Museum of Art, the Dallas Contemporary, Dallas International Film Festival, 500 X, the MAC, Aurora Light and Video Festival Dallas, and many other exhibits and film fests across Texas. Jalilvand earned a Bachelor of Science from Texas A&M University Commerce and a Master of Arts from University of Texas Dallas. The child of a celebrated Iranian actor, Changiz Jalilvand, Niloo was sent off to boarding school in England at the age of 10. In 1979 her parents fled the Islamic Revolution to the US where Niloo was reunited with her family at age 17. This nomadic upbringing fostered her chameleon-like ability to adapt quickly to new environments. This flexibility has enhanced her abilities as an educator and a community organizer. In 2010, Niloo Jalilvand originated the Film and Video Arts program at the nationally recognized Booker T. Washington HSPVA, and founded the Pegasus Film Festival, which supports young impactful filmmakers across Texas. Additionally, she is on the board of directors for the Video Association of Dallas, the advisory board of Dallas Film Society, and Sheed Persian Film Festival.
Most recently I use video to create stories. Historically, I come from a more formal math and painting background, although I’ve used any combination of computer graphics and animation, analog and digital painting, text and poetry, graphics, stop-motion, and sound design to create work. This work, Dépaysement, is one of the shorts from a series of video art titled ‘Displacement’, 2018, where I incorporated some documentary footage from a film my son Cyrus Stowe has been working on since 2015, the year I returned to Iran having been exiled since 1979. Knowing of the strict moral rules in public places, I was troubled by feelings of not belonging and powerlessness in my ‘own’ country. This series explores the pain of missing one’s homeland, identity, memory, ancestry, and female expression. In continuance with themes of ‘not belonging’ the work Dépaysement, takes us on a journey of unfaithful taste through multinational images and sounds. The inability to commit to a single culture, aesthetic, or societal standard is the source of the internal conflict that drives my work—mixing traditional Islamic portrayal with Western feminism, classical Persian music, punk-rock, and pop. The audio-video experience is an eclectic mix of contrasting objectives like chador and mini-skirts.
MONA KASRA

“Dépaysement” image stills, Video Installation 5 mins TRT 2019

ARTIST STATEMENT:

Inbetweenness alludes to the ambiguities of deterritorialization and of hybrid cultural identity. It navigates a destabilizing state of diasporic existence by reimagining and experiencing childhood home through digital mapping tools. Searching for traces of the past within satellite imagery, aerial photography, and 360 photography, Kasra yearns for a sense of belonging to her homeland.

BIOGRAPHY:

Born in Tehran, Iran. Mona Kasra holds a Ph.D. in Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communication from the University of Texas-Dallas, an M.F.A. in Video/Digital Art from California State University Northridge, and a B.A. in Visual Communication from the Art University of Tehran. She is a new media artist, interdisciplinary researcher, and Assistant Professor of Digital Media Design at the University of Virginia (UVA). Her research trajectory involves exploring the confluence of media technologies, art, and culture, reflecting on the impact of emerging media on personal, political, and creative expression, and experimenting with affordances of such media for artistic practices of performance and installation. Ms. Kasra's artwork has been exhibited in galleries and online exhibitions. She has juried, curated, and programmed for various film festivals and art exhibitions.
POURAN LASHINI

Iranian-born Pouran Lashini has been an active artist for more than twenty years. Growing up in Tehran, she was immersed in the rich culture of traditional Persian art and had the opportunity to benefit from Iran's renowned miniaturists, illustrators, and calligraphers from the time she was a teenager. Through ten years, she had an opportunity to learn an extensive background in painting and calligraphy using a particular method of Middle Eastern Art. Her works have shown nationally and internationally including The ‘Institut du monde Arabe’, Paris, France; Cultural Studies Center, Queen's University, NY; Cultural Studies Center; “Calligraphy in Persian Script”, British Museum, London, England; “Miniature”, Gousei Hall Istanbul, Turkey, “Tabris University Hall—Miniature”, Tehran, Iran, “Miniature & Illumination” Cardiff Hall University, Cardiff, Wales and many others galleries and festivals. Currently, she is pursuing her PhD in Aesthetic Studies at the University of Texas at Dallas. In addition to her artistic practice, she has written and translated four books and many articles on Islamic Arts and in philosophy. She teaches Philosophy and History of Art at the college level.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

My rich cultural heritage has strongly influenced my artwork and thought. As a teenager, I practice Persian miniatures and illustration for many years with great mastery in Iranian artwork, and I relish the spiritual connectedness and discipline of forms that have long been traditional in Middle Eastern art. For me, my art works seek out a divine beauty as a visual language that I wish to share in execution of technique, content and interpretive expression. Color, which is such an integral part of my work, must unite in a conversation of lights with darks as they speak through the objects and forms of my imagery. Discipline in the forms and technique of Middle Eastern art may seem like a mystery, the unknown and the unexplained are often in need of insight to fully receive the benefits. I strive to bring some of that to my viewers- to be able to process my art works both culturally and on an individual level. To embraced the beauty of the universal spirit through the luminosity of color and light, gesture of movement and a rich layering of imagery and story that will reveal the love and light in our world is my objective.
POURAN LASHINI

‘Broken Heart’ Gouache on paper, Pooran Lashini  15”x 20”
Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina 1970 which at that time was the part of the former Socialist Yugoslavia (Socijalisticka Federativna Republika Jugoslavija – SFRJ. Loving art and studying philosophy in high school Goran was then sent to the military school to become an aircraft technician and then watched in dismay as the country of his origin disintegrated in the abyss of a civil war. At 27, he finally escaped the onslaught of that war, immigrating to the U.S in 1997. Living first in Chicago and then Dallas, he got accepted into the BFA program at Washington University in St. Louis, Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts as Kenneth E. Hudson Scholar of Art, receiving his BFA in print and drawing in 2006 graduating Magna Cum Laude. He continued on to complete his MFA in 2009 achieving honors and recognition. In 2008 Goran participated in “New American Talent 23” exhibition curated by Nato Thompson, CREATIVE TIME at Arthouse, Austin, Texas then practiced his art as part of the Occupy Movement 2011. He then left to Afghanistan for 5 years taking a civilian job with U.S. Air Base Bagram as contract managerial labor and interpreter to work off student loans. These indelible experiences with the Afghan people in this contained and isolated environment has inform his current work.

Video Still “Within A Horizon of the Common”

BORJAN MARIC

BIOGRAPHY:
I want to revisit memories of coming from a country torn by civil war, and later working in Afghanistan as a contractor but not as a direct description of the destruction wars leave behind, rather as a reflection of relations, or contradictions between perceived fragility of human flesh and spirit in relation to materials associated with strength and endurance, i.e., stones, concrete blocks, bunkers and or sandbags. Every military base at the end of the day is a fortification designed for the defense of territories in warfare. In within their enclosure life takes on its own routine. Sandbags and the structures built using sandbags are important decorum of the life on the base in a war zone. What makes them appealing is their architectural structure when filled by sand, or as a structure built piling them up. At first they look strong but as time goes the nature retakes the ownership of these structures eroding the material and allowing the signs of life to slowly find their ways out of sand, gravel or concrete T-Walls. Markers of sincere humanity are depicted in this video installation portraying one of my coworkers signing a love song while preparing the sandbags for my night shift to work with around the base. In this abyss of war I was searching for moments of sincerity as signs of hope being the flowers reaching the sun or coworkers passionately singing about love.

ARTIST STATEMENT:

GWEN MARIC

“Within A Horizon of the Common” 12 x 15 x 8”, Installation, 2019
**ADNAN RAZVI**

"MAUA" Acrylic and Spray Paint on Canvas 106 x 84  2019

**BIOGRAPHY:**

Adnan is an American artist born in Chicago. As a child of immigrants from Pakistan and Uganda, both sides of his lineage experienced expulsion from their home countries as a result of war and political de-stabilization. Over the past decade, Adnan co-founded a working artist collective called “SOLVENT”. Working collaboratively with other artists of different mediums, the group exhibited at various spaces throughout the Dallas area including “Collective Bargaining” an exhibition which explored the myriad manifestations of collective behavior at the University of Texas at Dallas. SOLVENT also exhibited “Working Title”, an interactive art exhibit which addressed community involvement, at Ro2 Art Downtown. Post collective, Adnan began to focus on his solo development as an artist. He exhibited at “MOCAfest”, organized by the WIEF foundation in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Adnan was a highlighted artist in a group exhibition titled “American Painting Now” curated by Erin Joyce. Adnan graduated from the University of Texas at Dallas with a focus on Historical Studies and Studio Art/Painting. Additionally, he completed his Masters degree from Southern Methodist University with a focus on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management. Adnan is also a trainer in Cultural Agility and Unconscious Bias developing tools and conducting lectures to promote cross cultural understanding. He currently resides and has a private studio in Dallas, TX.
In a household where Urdu/Hindi & Swahili were spoken, calligraphy and arabesque text were a permanent fixture and medium for connection in his life. Calligraphic Futurism establishes an associate affiliation of the medium relative to the individual perception in still familiar, yet new suggestive appropriations. Through the removal of language, the message is placed in the flow and transformation of the script, signaling an evolution in consciousness for our own American generation.

“FADED”  Acrylic and Spray Paint  85”x 84”  2017

ARTIST STATEMENT:

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Aqsa Shakil attended the prestigious National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan, receiving a full scholarship. In 2002 she moved to the U.S. and continued undergraduate studies in Arts and Performance at the University of Texas at Dallas, receiving the Jonelle and Bryce Jordan Scholarship for the Arts, graduating Summa Cum Laude in 2005. She attended Meadows School of Art at SMU on full scholarship. She was the first graduate student at the Juvenal Reis Residency in New York City where she helped initiate a now fully funded SMU month-long residency. She has received numerous awards, including the Arch and Anne Giles Kimbrough Award at the Dallas Museum of Art in 2006. Following her ‘break out’ solo show at Oliver Kamm Gallery NYC, and write-up by art critic Jerry Saltz, she has been actively showing in Dallas, Los Angeles, San Diego, Vermont, New Mexico, London, and has had two recent solo shows in Pakistan. Her new work is from her residency in France last year at Chateau Orquevaux.

"Motia" 22"x 26" ink, hail and watercolor 2016

**BIOGRAPHY:**

Aqsa Shakil attended the prestigious National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan, receiving a full scholarship. In 2002 she moved to the U.S. and continued undergraduate studies in Arts and Performance at the University of Texas at Dallas, receiving the Jonelle and Bryce Jordan Scholarship for the Arts, graduating Summa Cum Laude in 2005. She attended Meadows School of Art at SMU on full scholarship. She was the first graduate student at the Juvenal Reis Residency in New York City where she helped initiate a now fully funded SMU month-long residency. She has received numerous awards, including the Arch and Anne Giles Kimbrough Award at the Dallas Museum of Art in 2006. Following her ‘break out’ solo show at Oliver Kamm Gallery NYC, and write-up by art critic Jerry Saltz, she has been actively showing in Dallas, Los Angeles, San Diego, Vermont, New Mexico, London, and has had two recent solo shows in Pakistan. Her new work is from her residency in France last year at Chateau Orquevaux.
“Endless Opportunity”, ink on paper, 22”x 30” 2018

ARTIST STATEMENT

Having been rooted, un-rooted and re-rooted from Tanzania, to Lahore, to Dallas, and now San Francisco, she has acquired an obsession for tracing every slipping moment. These moments, along with old photos, are submerged in memory pockets invested into vast atmospheric spaces with random splatters of precipitation.
Fahimeh Vahdat is an Iranian American Mixed Media Installation / Performance artist, Women & Children / Human Rights Activist living in greater Baltimore / DC region. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally and has received numerous awards including 2018 Robert W. Deutsch Foundation, Rubys project award, an NEA regional grant and Puffin Foundation grant for collaborative works among others. Recently, she was Wampler Eminent Visiting Artist / Scholar at James Madison University and an artist-in- residence at RedLine Milwaukee, where art and social justice merges. She has served as a mentor-artist with various organizations for many years as well as on numerous Arts Advisory Boards and serves as juror nationwide. Vahdat has exhibited her work nationally and internationally recently at Yinchuan Art Museum, China, Cultural Art center in Argentina, Italy and Milwaukee Art Museum.

"Sacred Crossing", mixed media, instalation detail

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Fahimeh Vahdat’s research topics have included Human / Women Rights issues, female oppression, violence against women and children and the prison systems especially in USA, Iran and the Middle East. Growing up in the Iranian culture with its long period of censorship, she speaks through symbols and metaphors in her art. As an Iranian American Baha’i artist living in exile, her work also addresses the experience of “in-betweenness”, as the Eastern and Western cultures merge and separate.
Atif Akın is an artist and designer. He studied engineering and design at Middle East Technical University in Ankara. There he taught various courses in the context of contemporary art and design in Europe and Istanbul. He is currently living in New York and Associate Professor of Art & Design at Rutgers University. In 2009, his work was listed in the Younger Than Jesus art directory project of the New Museum, published by Phaidon. That same year, Akın co-curated a seminal media art exhibition, Uncharted: User Frames in Media Arts, and edited an accompanying book. Throughout his practice in Istanbul, he regularly collaborated with Ars Electronica in Austria, ZKM in Karlsruhe and Pixelache in Helsinki. Akın was the recipient of the 2015 apex art Franchise Program award in New York, and the organizer of the zine project and exhibition, Apricots from Damascus, on behalf of apexart, and co-produced and hosted by SALT in Istanbul. In 2016, he took part in the public programming of Olafur Eliasson’s Greenlight Project, hosted by TBA 21 in Vienna. With the same institution, he embarked on an expedition to research nuclear test sites in French Polynesia. His work examines science, nature, mobility, and politics through an (a)historical and contemporary lens. Through a series of activities made up of research, documentation and studio practice, Akın’s work is interested in the manifestation of boundaries—physical, metaphorical and linguistic. He considers trans disciplinary issues, through a techno scientific lens, in aesthetic and political contexts. ‘I believe that art is the only contemporary arena that can present critical perspectives on an issue in a multilayered, transgressive, sometimes dissonant, yet progressive way’. http://atifakin.info
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Apricots from Damascus is a publication & exhibition project about art in a state of mobility and exile, with a specific focus on İstanbul and current artist communities. The exhibition was curated by Atif Akin and Dilek Winchester. It was hosted by the SALT Galata and supported as the Apexart Franchise Program’s winning exhibition for 2015-16. It engages publication as an artistic practice in an effort to connect through cultural commons, or the shared interdisciplinary knowledge acquired by varied communities. Zines were published in three languages: Arabic, Turkish, and English. These three languages are important to correlate the artists, issues and the audience of the project. The project culminated with an exhibition hosted by SALT, İstanbul, in December 2015, where the zines, artworks about the themes explored in the zines, and documentation of the project were displayed. The exhibition space served as a social space where – exiled or settled – artists int İstanbul could come together. http://apexart.org/exhibitions/akin-winchester.php
Jin-Ya Huang was born in Taipei, Taiwan, and moved to the United States when she was 13. At the time, Jin-Ya knew no English beyond the alphabet. However, she’d been making art since she was three years old, and “found art to be a universal language.” Because of her personal struggles with cultural identity and displacement, this notion has colored the way and the reason Jin-Ya creates. “I am a mixed media artist making artwork that explores the complex struggle and beauty of the immigrant diaspora,” she says. “My work particularly focuses on women and their families in the United States. My mission is to make art that speaks this universal language to different races and gives each subject a unique voice.” In addition to utilizing her artistic voice to ignite positive cultural exchanges, Jin-Ya is also deeply committed to and involved in local non-profit organizations. She works with the Human Rights Initiative, which offers 100 percent free legal services to immigrants in DFW who are seeking political asylum or shelter from abuse. She has also collaborated with Make Art With Purpose (MAP), which is an organization that “advances models for producing art that are rooted in consciousness and include ideas for positive environmental and social change.”

Jin-ya graduated from UTDallas 1995 with a Bachelor of Science, Arts and Humanities.
Break Bread, Break Borders is catering with a cause. We are a social enterprise empowering refugee women economically, through the storytelling of food and culture. BBBB creates jobs and opportunities. Every meal cooked in our global kitchen is making everlasting social impact. We break bread with the community, and break down borders at the same time.