MEDFORD, MA - The Tufts University Art Gallery at the Shirley and Alex Aidekman Arts Center proudly presents Illuminated Geographies: Pakistani Miniaturist Practice in the Wake of the Global Turn, featuring new works by Ambreen Butt, Faiza Butt, Murad Khan Mumtaz, and Saira Wasim, on view through March 31, 2013. London-based artist Faiza Butt will speak about her work at Tufts on February 28 at 4 pm.

Illuminated Geographies explores how contemporary miniaturist painting is evolving from its roots in Mughal painting, as it is brought into different contexts and its stylistic foundation is adapted through different artistic visions. The practice of Mughal miniature painting originated during the 16th century in the Mughal Empire, spanning what is now India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan. As this Muslim empire fell into decline, so did its art form, marked by a meticulous attention to minute detail, lush jewel tones, epic subject matter, and diminutive scale. Today we are experiencing a renaissance in this mode of artistic expression, due, in large part, to the National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan (NCA), which since the 1980s has taught this traditional practice of wasli paper- and brush-making techniques, paint mixing, narrative style, and iconography. Two generations of artists have now studied at the NCA and have reinvigorated this practice as a relevant, globalized contemporary art form by infusing it with their individual visions and contemporary subject matter.

The exhibition focuses on four artists trained at the NCA now living outside of Pakistan each of whom are pushing the boundaries of miniaturist practice in different directions. These artists --Ambreen Butt, Faiza Butt, Murad Khan Mumtaz, and Saira Wasim -- all deal with themes of cultural amalgamation in their work. Influenced by their current location and distance from Pakistan, they address political, social and cultural realities of Pakistan and their present environments. The works

Faiza Butt, Zaveer Zangeer, 2011, standing light box. Image courtesy of the artist.
In this exhibition are eloquent illustrations of hybridity—of language, place, and time. They draw parallels between divergent traditions and allow for different perspectives to occupy a single space. Despite a shared origin in Pakistan, the subject of *Illuminated Geographies* is both translocal and transcultural in nature—reaching across national boundaries and beyond Islamic traditions.

*Illuminated Geographies* has been organized by the Tufts University Art Gallery and guest curated by Justine Ludwig, adjunct curator at the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati.

Together with the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, which organized *Realms of Intimacy: Miniaturist Practice from Pakistan* (on view September 2011 to January 2012), a multi-authored publication, titled *Translocal: Miniaturist Practice Out of Pakistan*, will be co-published by Tufts and the CAC, featuring the artists in both shows -- Ambreen Butt, Faiza Butt, Murad Khan Mumtaz, Imran Qureshi, Nusra Qureshi, and Saaira Wasim – installation views, and essays by Iftikar Dadi, Salima Hashmi, Justine Ludwig, Ayesha Jalal, and Virginia Wiles. It will also feature 10 contemporary artists trained at the NCA working internationally: Hamra Abbas; Khadim Ali; Ayesha Durrani; Ahsan Jamal; Aisha Khalid; Hasnat Mehmood; Tazeen Qayyum; Talha Rathore; Shahzia Sikander; Muhammad Zeeshan.

To pre-order the publication, available as of April 1, contact: Jeanne.koles@tufts.edu. Price: $50, plus shipping and handling. ISBN 9781880593110

**PUBLIC EVENTS:**

**Opening Reception**
Thursday, January 24, 5:30-8 pm  
Introduction to the exhibition by Curator, Justine Ludwig 6:30 pm

**Lunchtime conversation with London-based artist Faiza Butt on gender, politics, and sexuality in contemporary Pakistan**
Wednesday, February 27, 12:15-1:30  
Co-organized with the Tufts’ Women’s Center and LGBT Center  
Meets at the Alumnae Lounge. Lunch provided.  
Space is limited; RSVP required: artgallery@tufts.edu

**Artist Lecture by Faiza Butt**
Thursday, February 28, 4 pm  
Co-sponsored by the Tufts Center for South Asian & Indian Ocean Studies

**Closing Reception and Book Launch for Translocation: Contemporary Miniaturist Practice Out of Pakistan**
Wednesday, March 27, 4-5:30 pm  
RSVP to artgallery@tufts.edu  
For a full list of events, visit http://artgallery.tufts.edu/calendar/

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**GALLERY HOURS**
Tuesday - Sunday 11 AM - 5 PM  
Thursdays 11 AM - 8 PM

**CLOSED FOR SPRING BREAK**
Saturday, March 16 - Sunday, March 24