More than 4,000 collages were created to compose this 15 minute, 30 second “hand-made film” by Stacey Steers, who teaches Film Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Shot in 35 mm, the 2011 film features the early-20th century actress Lillian Gish, who has been seamlessly appropriated from silent-era cinema and plunged into a new and haunting role. Night Hunter evokes a disquieting dreamscape, drawn from allegory, myth, and archetype. On view from January 17 to March 31, 2013, the film will be continuously projected in an exhibition that also includes a monumental dollhouse sculpture (inside which small LED screens feature portions of the film that correspond to that room of the house) and eight preparatory collages. The filmic, literary, and visual sources, references, and allusions in Steers’ work are so rich that Tufts University Art Gallery Director Amy Schlegel, who invited Steers to exhibit at Tufts, attempts to unpack some of them in the following interview.

Featuring new works by: Ambrassen Butt, Faiza Butt, Murad Khan Mumtaz, and Saira Wasim

The practice of Mughal miniature painting originated during the 16th century in the Mughal Empire, which spanned what is now India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan. This art form was marked by a meticulous attention to minute detail, lush jewel tones, epic subject matter, and diminutive scale. As the Mughal Empire fell into decline, so did this style. 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 revived this practice as a relevant contemporary art form by infusing it with their individual visions and contemporary subject matter. Illuminated Geographies explores how Pakistani miniaturist painting is evolving as it enters into new contexts and how its stylistic foundation is being adapted through four very different artistic visions.

continued on page 2
Introduction to Illuminated Geographies continued

This exhibition focuses on four artists trained at the NCA now living outside of Pakistan who are pushing the boundaries of miniaturist practice in different directions. New works by these four artists—Ambreen Butt, Faiza Butt, Murad Khan Mumtaz, and Saira Wasiym—all deal with themes of cultural hybridity as the artists address the political, social, and cultural realities of both Pakistan and their present locations. Saira Wasiym, for example, critiques American politics in the visual language of political cartoons, while Faiza Butt addresses the representation of Muslim men in the London media and the aesthetic qualities of the Urdu and English languages. Through their aesthetically beautiful objects, these artists ask difficult questions and confront us with the realities of the world we live in.

This exhibition has been guest curated by Justine Ludwig, adjunct curator at the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati. A multi-authored publication, Translocation: Contemporary Miniaturist Practice Out of Pakistan (see opposite page) will be co-published by the Tufts University Art Gallery and The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, which organized Realm of Intimacy: Miniaturist Practice from Pakistan (on view September 2011 to January 2012; featuring Ambreen Butt, Faiza Butt, Imran Qureshi, Nusrat Qureshi, and Saira Wasiym). The book will also feature ten contemporary artists trained at the NCA working internationally.

An Excerpt from Freedom of Expression: Lahore in the 1990s from Translocation: Contemporary Miniaturist Practice Out of Pakistan
Salima Hashmi, Dean, School of Visual Arts, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore

O n an evening in August 1988, a friend in Islamabad called to give me guarded instructions to turn on the television, because “someone has gone.” The last phrase was said in a whisper. Indeed, the regular broadcast was replaced by old-fashioned patriotic songs, in Pakistan a sure sign of a power vacuum. Something was up. Seconds later, a former student pulled up to the front door on his motorcycle. Dazed and excited, he had come from the old city, where there was dancing in the streets and milk vendors were distributing free milk. There had been a plane crash and the top army brass was wiped out, including General Zia ul-Haq. The disbelief—and then the relief! The constant awareness of the general’s vengeful, watchful presence dissipated immediately, gone like a puff of smoke. There followed the strange, almost physical sensation of a burden being lifted from the collective consciousness. The arts, beleaguered for eleven years, took a while to loosen up. It was a challenge to negotiate the space in our lives that had been altered and reconfigured in Zia’s years, 1977 to 1988. . .

Despite the uncertainty, the mood in institutions such as the National College of Arts (NCA), formerly the Mayo School of Art, was ebullient. Curricula were reshaped, government edicts forbidding male and female students from participating in music or theatrical performances were ignored, and dress codes were modified; the sari, once of old-fashioned patriotic songs, in Pakistan a sure sign of a power vacuum. Something was up. Seconds later, a former student pulled up to the front door on his motorcycle. Dazed and excited, he had come from the old city, where there was dancing in the streets and milk vendors were distributing free milk. There had been a plane crash and the top army brass was wiped out, including General Zia ul-Haq. The disbelief—and then the relief! The constant awareness of the general’s vengeful, watchful presence dissipated immediately, gone like a puff of smoke. There followed the strange, almost physical sensation of a burden being lifted from the collective consciousness. The arts, beleaguered for eleven years, took a while to loosen up. It was a challenge to negotiate the space in our lives that had been altered and reconfigured in Zia’s years, 1977 to 1988. . .

Within the NCA, music, mime, and puppetry complemented the academic program, engaging students outside the lecture halls and studios. Traditional and popular culture, long ignored by officialdom, was now incorporated into performances with skills acquired in the studio. When Pakistan celebrated fifty years of independence in 1997, it was a time of rejoicing and glossing over the past of the NCA with the NCA organizing some of its most reflective and serious stage performances ever. Employing shadow puppets, film, sound, mime, music, and dance, performances captured the story of the nation’s history with humor and insight. None of these disciplines formed part of the official curriculum at the NCA, yet it was often on the stage that one experienced the full impact of the creative energy at the college, and this energy affected the teaching of fine art as well.

MOVING ON TO THE FUTURISTS

The Tufts University Art Gallery has added a new category to the Contemporary Art Circle’s levels of giving: The Futurist. This $50 giving level is ideal for recent alumni who want to stay involved with the Art Gallery at Tufts and network with collectors, aficionados, and other arts professionals.

The Futurist may also be the right fit for Tufts and SMFA faculty and staff who want to support the Gallery, its academic publications, and innovative programing, and enjoy the seasonal events in Boston and New York.

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L. Parker Stephenson
Interview with Valerie Moon continued

East Harlem, Atelier Populaire, The Situationists, ASCO, JR, The Atlas Group, and the Black Power movement, for example. By my senior year, it became so obvious to me that what had previously felt like mindless topic-pursing was entirely intuitive and that my primary interest lies in art and artists that seek to challenge the social and political status quo through artistic practices and process.

To complement my academic studies, I interned at galleries, museums, and other arts institutions both in the US and Spain, where I observed the idiosyncratic environments and personalities of the art world and came to understand what my demands are of that world.

HS: Where would you like to be in five, ten, or twenty years?

VM: Hard to say...though, if I could be an “art-ivist” with a ridiculous life story along the lines of Lucy Lippard I could be pretty happy in twenty years!

HS: What advice would you give to undergraduates interested in pursuing a career in the arts?

VM: My greatest advice would be to listen to alumni panels, career services networking advice, and professors, but to also to know when to completely scrap that and have confidence in what you and your unique experiences have to offer.

If you want to network well, you really have to know what you’re talking about and you have to be a creator, not just a critic or interpreter. Really invest time in figuring out what you are passionate about and why—socially, politically, personally, existentially, etc.—your commitment to that subject is indispensable.

Also, read everything, look at everything, collect ideas, and take risks to put yourself in absurd or challenging situations. You never know when you might ultimately stand out as a candidate.

HS: What questions do you have for those who have blazed the trail before you?

VM: How does one pursue the topics and questions that he/she strongly believes in, without losing touch with what issues are really pressing for the communities and contexts around us? How do I learn to counteract the deep-set ego that I often see even in the most brilliant of curators, and become tuned-in to an authentic multiplicity of subjectivities and viewpoints?
Tufts University Beelzebubs: 50 Years of Fun Through Song
Gail Bambrick, senior writer, Tufts University Publications

Flash back to the early 1960s and the hit tunes of the doo-wop era. The Marcel's classic Blue Moon (with its famous bom-ba-ba-bom-dang-dang vocal lead-in) set the tone for The Platters, The Drifters, The Miracles and even Jan and Dean and the Beach Boys.

These were the sounds of the times in 1962 when a handful of Tufts men gathered to sing in the basement of West Hall. They called themselves Jumbos Disciples: The Beelzebubs.

Pop music and the Beelzebubs have come a long way in half a century, and thanks in large part to the Bubs' inventive musical pioneering, college a cappella has soared into the spotlight through television's Glee and Sing-Off programs and in the new movie about a cappella Pitch Perfect.

This year, the country's leading male a cappella group is celebrating its golden anniversary with a special exhibit Tufts University Beelzebubs: 50 Years of Fun Through Song at the Tufts University Art Gallery's Remis Sculpture Court, January 17 to May 27.

It is being curated by Bubs alumnus Danny Lichtenfeld, A93, who performed with the group all five years of his Tufts/New England Conservatory dual-degree program. These were the years, he says, when the Bubs played a key role in changing the course of a cappella history.

"It was just a very exciting time to be part of a singing group that was on the cutting edge," Lichtenfeld says. "We were leading the incorporation of vocal percussion into a cappella music, which enabled us to begin performing a much wider range of current pop music." "Barbershop, gospel, jazz and doo-wop were standard fare for college a cappella groups in the day—and for a while it matched popular taste. But by the '70s, a cappella's reach had fallen behind never-to-be music trends.

"We were traveling around to colleges every weekend in the late '80s and early '90s and many groups were still singing the same songs they'd been singing for years—more choral oriented glee club kind of stuff," Lichtenfeld says. "When we'd perform, jaws were just dropping everywhere. It was fun. We were at the vanguard." While the group had been doing original arrangements since the late '60s and early '70s, it was Bubs member Deke Sharon, A91, who composed vocal percussion-heavy arrangements that made the Bubs one of the first college a cappella groups to perform the likes of "Rio," by Duran Duran, and "Let's Go Crazy," by Prince. Both are on their groundbreaking 1991 album, Foster Street.

Sharon is still a major force in the a cappella world and is credited with creating the contemporary a cappella sound. He was the arranger for the movie Social Network, and music director and arranger for Universal Pictures' new release Pitch Perfect.

Other big favorites made possible by the Bubs' new arranging style during Lichtenfeld's time were Peter Gabriell's arrangements of current pop music.

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Foster Street was released in 1991 and featured original arrangements by Sharon and other Bubs members. The album included popular covers of songs like "Happy Birthday," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," and "We Are the Champions," as well as original songs like "The Morning After." The album was critically acclaimed and helped establish the Beelzebubs as one of the top college a cappella groups in the country.

In 1994, the group released their second album, "The Morning After," which featured original arrangements of popular songs like "Happy Birthday," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," and "We Are the Champions," as well as original songs like "The Morning After." The album was critically acclaimed and helped establish the Beelzebubs as one of the top college a cappella groups in the country.

The group has continued to release albums and perform around the world, and their music has been featured in numerous films, TV shows, and commercials.

Recent Alumni Profile:
Valerie Moon '11, Art Professional in Port-au-Prince, Haiti
An Interview with Hannah Swartz

HS: How did you come to decide that the arts is the right career path for you?
VM: Figuring out what kind of art I wanted to pursue was a simple connect-the-dots of my undergraduate education. I had pursued subjects such as Tropicalia, murals in gentrified neighborhoods, and the history of the Haitian Revolution in order to create a cohesive understanding of the art making process. I found myself deeply interested in the intersection of art and activism, and I knew that I wanted to use my skills as an artist to create positive change in the world.

HS: What role do you see art playing in the current social and political climate?
VM: Art has always played a powerful role in shaping our understanding of the world and our place in it. In the current social and political climate, I see art acting as a bridge between different communities and as a tool for advocating for social justice. By creating a space for dialogue and exchange, art can help to bring people together and foster understanding and empathy.

HS: How did you come to decide that Haiti is the right place to pursue your career in art?
VM: I was drawn to Haiti because of my family's connection to the country, as well as the unique cultural and historical context. I wanted to use my art to create positive change in the country and to help to bring about a more just and equitable society.

HS: How did you get involved in the arts education program in Haiti?
VM: I was fortunate to have access to a network of artists and educators who were committed to creating a more inclusive and equitable arts education system in Haiti. I worked with these individuals to develop curriculum and programs that were designed to reach a wide range of students, including those from underserved communities.

HS: How do you think your time at Tufts has contributed to your success in the arts?
VM: Tufts provided me with a solid foundation in art history, criticism, and theory, as well as a strong understanding of the social and political context in which art is produced and consumed. These skills have been invaluable in my work as a teacher and artist in Haiti, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have been educated at such an incredible institution.
Museum Without Walls @ Tufts: Gallery to Launch Mobile App in April

Philippa Pitts, Gallery Graduate Assistant

Although the Tufts University Art Gallery mounts its roster of annual exhibitions within the walls of The Shirley and Alex Aidekman Arts Center at 40 Talbot Avenue, it is also the steward of Tufts University’s Permanent Art Collection. Without a dedicated gallery to display selections from the permanent art collection, the Tufts University Art Gallery administers a circulating loan and public art program, extending the museum across campus. From monumental bronzes on the greens to framed prints in department buildings, the Gallery has placed over 200 works of art in buildings and spaces far outside of its own walls. Some are masterworks by household names including Helen Frankenthaler, Frank Stella, and Louise Nevelson. Others are specific images chosen for their relevance to student life.

These works on view have been regarded as hidden treasures on campus, each identified by basic “tombstone” labels indicating artist, title, date, medium, and donor. To date, there has not been an overarching guide for visitors interested in seeing art on campus; those visitors who happen upon a staked work of art in the collection would not likely know where to go for additional information. Dispensed as they are around campus, the works lack the contextual fullness of the Gallery’s exhibitions: signage, thematic groupings, interpretive wall panels, tour guides, and staff. They do not currently benefit from the impressive array of educational and outreach programs the Gallery plans around its temporary exhibitions, from workshops and curatorial talks to brochures, audio guides, and catalogs. Thanks to a generous grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, The Tufts University Permanent Art Collection will enter the spotlight and receive the full curatorial and programmatic treatment this April via a new smartphone app called “Museum Without Walls @Tufts.” The app by no means replaces the curated exhibitions which draw the general public, classes, and student groups into the galleries. Instead, the app targets the informal, accidental, and casual encounters that many students, faculty, alumni, and community members have with works of art around campus every day.

For instance, a person standing in front of Raul Gonzalez’s outdoor mural Manly... will be offered far more than the few paragraphs of text on the artwork’s label. Using one’s smartphone, a visitor can self-select from various information vehicles, choosing to hear from the artist directly as he speaks about his work on Tufts’ campus, reading what fellow students have said about the piece, adding one’s own comments, and much more. They might be intrigued by images of murals installed at the same site in previous years and find themselves comparing Gonzalez’s work with Shepard Fairey’s, whose wheat pastes and silkscreen print murals inhabited the same wall adjacent to the Mayer Campus Center from 2009-2011.

The app can host video and audio content, as well as zoomable high resolution images to allow visitors to get closer to the pieces than previously possible. Visitors will even be able to pose a question to gallery staff. The app will have numerous features, so the choice of what and how to learn is in the visitor’s hands.

Using the TourSphere Platform, the Gallery will take advantage of cutting-edge technology in the museum field. Works will be searchable by various criteria, for examples: artist’s name, theme, location, or accession number. Visitors lost on campus can locate themselves (and works of art) on GPS-enabled maps. In addition to providing content to those whose curiosity is piqued when they happen upon a work of art, the app will offer a number of thematic guided tours at the touch of a button, beginning each tour at the piece closest to them, not a set starting point, such as Aidekman Arts Center. With an attractive and easy to use platform, this app is a quick and easy portal into a wealth of information – accessible to anyone, anywhere, and at any time. Watch out for the launch of “Museum Without Walls @Tufts” in April 2013!
Q. (A.S.): Night Hunter is named after the 1955 cult classic thriller Night of the Hunter, starring Robert Mitchum, Shelley Winters, and Lillian Gish. Could you tell me what you found so inspiring about the film, which tells the perverse story of a reverend-turned-serial-killer who tries to con a widower’s children into handing over money hidden by their dead father?

A (S.S.): Night of the Hunter is a stunning film and very much about the loss of innocence, which could also be read as a theme in Night Hunter. Honestly, the title was chosen at the end of the project, so I wasn’t driven by connections throughout the making of the film, but I did feel that besides the critical role Lillian Gish plays in the film, there was a sense of maternal obligation in her character to strive to care for children who randomly appear in her life that was not unlike the way her character in Night Hunter tends to the giant eggs who make their uninvited appearance. In Night of the Hunter Lillian’s character responds fiercely to the threat Robert Mitchum poses toward her wards, which could also be seen as parallel in some ways the later scenes in Night Hunter.

Q. (A.S.): Your film’s plot seems to resonate with Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s 1892 short story The Yellow Wallpaper, a feminist classic, in which the female protagonist, confined by her husband to the house, slowly goes mad, or escapes into her own fantasy world. The dollhouse sculpture (pictured on the front cover), inside which excerpts of the story are pasted, is named after the 1955 cult movie Night of the Hunter. Could you elaborate on the literary and visual art influences on your work, and specifically Night Hunter?

A (Stacey Steers): I had seen Lillian Gish in D. W. Griffith’s Broken Blossoms and was deeply moved by her fearless performance as a teenage girl with an abusive father. Her emotional presence is quite striking. After I finished my film Phantom Canyon I was looking for a new way to incorporate antique photographic materials into my collages and it occurred to me she would make an excellent subject to experiment with. I was looking for a new way to incorporate antique photographic materials into my collages and it occurred to me she would make an excellent subject to experiment with. I had seen Lillian Gish in D. W. Griffith’s Broken Blossoms and was deeply moved by her fearless performance as a teenage girl with an abusive father. Her emotional presence is quite striking. After I finished my film Phantom Canyon I was looking for a new way to incorporate antique photographic materials into my collages and it occurred to me she would make an excellent subject to experiment with. I had seen Lillian Gish in D. W. Griffith’s Broken Blossoms and was deeply moved by her fearless performance as a teenage girl with an abusive father. Her emotional presence is quite striking. After I finished my film Phantom Canyon I was looking for a new way to incorporate antique photographic materials into my collages and it occurred to me she would make an excellent subject to experiment with.
Recap of Droplet: Short Talks and Performances on H\textsubscript{2}O

Dorothée Perin, Education Outreach Coordinator; and Hannah Swartz

On Wednesday, November 7th at 6pm, an unusual crowd assembled in the Remis Sculpture Court in the Aidekman Arts Center, including engineering majors, drama students, and members of the Tufts Mountain Club. These students, their friends, and faculty gathered for a one-of-a-kind event co-organized by the Tufts Institute of the Environment and the Tufts University Art Gallery entitled, Droplets: Short Talks and Performances on H\textsubscript{2}O. The partnership was spearheaded by the Gallery in association with the Orta\textsubscript{Water} project featured in the Gallery’s major fall 2012 exhibition Food-Water-Life—Lucy+Jorge Orta.

This event was conceived to promote the global issues highlighted by artists Lucy+Jorge Orta and for the Gallery to collaborate with an organization on campus that is doing something to resolve the concerns highlighted in the exhibition. We also hoped this collaboration would engage Tufts students directly and across disciplines. TIE (Tufts Institute of the Environment) and the Gallery sent out a call asking students to submit their presentations ideas with only two restrictions: the presentation should be related to the theme of water, and it had to be under 10 minutes.

The students’ submissions for droplets were as varied as we could have hoped for and showcased a variety of academic and recreational talents. The presentations and performances included:

- The New Music Ensemble—Tufts’ premiere group for avant-garde music, improvisation, and collaborative arts—performed a suite of three works: Wind, Drips, and Dorothy, and Antarctica. These performances were all inspired by the Orta’s artwork and used field recordings of environmental music combined with live performance.
- Contemporary art historian and entrepreneurship senior, Angelina Zhou, presented a double-take on the bottled water industry and broke down the marketing and advertising strategies behind these slippery brand campaigns in Spinning Water: Tricks of the Bottle Trade.
- Alex Zimmer, a sophomore majoring in International Relations with a concentration in Global Health, Nutrition, and the Environment and founder of the Tufts chapter of the Thirst Project spoke about the global water crisis in his talk Why Some Stay Thirsty with Water Running at Their Feet.

Halfway through the event, participants were invited to complete their own droplet: a small paper statement saying “I ___ water”, which they were invited to fill in. Some examples included, “I walk on H\textsubscript{2}O”, “I make flavored seltzer with H\textsubscript{2}O”, “I swim in fresh and salty H\textsubscript{2}O.” The statements served as conversation starters during the reception that followed the event. Participants and spectators mingled together, grabbed a bite, discussed presentations, talked about water, made new connections and listen to music played by DJ Brown Bear, also a Tufts student. At the Water Taste Testing table, a small group debated which pitcher was filled with tap water and which one contained bottled water.

Although unplanned, the evening’s snowfall—visible through the large glass windows—became a serendipitous backdrop for the evenings performances, the swirling crystalized droplets reminding us of the universality of water.

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[Extract of the text continues with various student presentations and performances, highlighting the theme of water and its importance in various contexts.]
A Look Inside Illuminated Geographies
Justine Ludwig, Guest Curator
Adjunct Curator, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati

Ambreen Butt

Ambreen Butt employs language in her recent work. In I Will Be Called Drawing her drawings speak, they announce their identity. Other works use writing from her journals. These pages are torn up in a rejection of the past version of the artist as is preserved in the writing. The pages are then reassembled to create patterns and images. The result is a new form that must be read and understood in a different way. These works compel the viewer to look at text as something to be viewed and interpreted as opposed to read. It is a reminder that the written word is always an interpretation. In Call Me A Blasphemy (see detail at left), Butt reworks an English translation of Pakistani blasphemy law by tearing apart the text and reconfiguring it as a swirling vortex, rewriting the text to the point of incomprehensibility. The texts she draws from become untranslatable—they are nonsense that only carry a small mark allows for a delicacy in the translation of Pakistani blasphemy law by tearing apart the text and reconfiguring it as a swirling vortex, rewriting the text to the point of incomprehensibility. The texts she draws from become untranslatable—they are nonsense that only carry a small sense of the author’s original intention.

Faiza Butt

This work depicts three men who were suspects in a plot to blow up at least seven transatlantic flights from London. In 2009 they were found guilty and jailed for life. In this work titled One, these men are shown as they were in their headshots that were broadcasted all over the media. The mug shot format removes all context from the individual and presents them as a criminal with very little room to interpret them as anything else. It is a format reminiscent of a beheading. Each of the three men displayed very different emotions when his photograph was taken. Butt worked directly from the images found in the newspaper but changed the scale and placed them on innocuous fuchsia backgrounds. The scale is threatening and directly confronts the viewer, yet the fact that they are carefully rendered in graphite, and silver leaf on wasli paper, 11 x 8 inches

n 1875 the National College of Arts (NCA) in Lahore, Pakistan was founded. Back then it was called the Mayo School of Art. The intention of this school was for Pakistani students to embrace and continue the Mughal tradition in painting, while looking to the Lahore Museum for inspiration. The miniature painting department was founded in 1985.

The miniature painting major at the NCA mimics a traditional eight-year apprenticeship but in only two years of schooling. The meticulous technique begins with the posture of the students. The students are required to be seated on the floor for hours a day, hold their papers close to their eyes and brace their painting arms against their body. Their posture is essential to mastering the tiny brushes needed to create works with such fine details. They spend their first-year-and-a-half copying historical works and learning to make their own tools. Only in the final half-year are they allowed to explore their own creative devices. The majority of artists known for their work in progressing miniaturist practice as a genre of contemporary art come from the NCA’s program.

Miniaturist painting as it evolved from the Mughal tradition is a language, an aesthetic language that is indigenous to South Asia and Pakistan in particular. The language of miniaturist painting is built upon redundant mark-making called pardaakhit. Due to this foundation, the line becomes a kind of mantra. The painting exhibits a great deal of the artist’s presence due to the close proximity that the artist has with the work during the long, exhausting hours of its production. Over time, the line of paint with a fine-tip brush on wasli paper, has evolved in a myriad of directions.

After graduating from the miniature painting program at the NCA many of the artists relocate to different countries. This migration sometimes occurs in the pursuit of continued education, at other times to start a family or for political reasons. In the artist’s change of location a shift in context occurs. A practice that is so geographically specific, as miniaturist painting is, clearly exhibits the signs of its relocation. Subject matter and style adapt to a new context. For many of the artists who studied at the NCA and then relocated to another country, their art form becomes a hybrid of cultural and environmental realities. As an art form that was bred from hybridity (Persian and Mughal), Pakistani miniaturist painting in the wake of the global turn is in a unique position to continue to evolve through its interaction with different cultures.

Murad Khan Mumtaz

Murad Khan Mumtaz, who has lived in the United States in addition to Pakistan, has created miniaturist works on passports and works that look to Native American traditions. In his body of work Return Mumtaz looks to the American Southwest and utilizes images associated with Native American culture. These paintings are set up like traditional miniaturist works on wasli paper with a clear delineated frame, yet they present idealized landscapes populated by tepees and speak to the history of the North American continent. Other works in the series such as Revelation (at right), Summer Nation, and Winter Nation focus on Native American symbols. Devoid of human presence, but implying human intervention, these works appear as memories. They speak to the reduction of Native American history to a romanticized narrative, the existence of the sacred in the visual language of symbols, and shared traditions between different cultures.

Saira Wasim

Saira Wasim’s works are centered on political figures. She aims to portray how the common man views the politicians who run their country, using figures such as George Bush and Pakistan leaders and generals. She merges these figures with symbols commonly used in Mughal traditional miniature painting with contemporary figures of objects. Like political cartoons, her works use humor to address important issues. Wasim explores the manner in which a single image is interpreted by various cultures. In one series, Ronald McDonald is both clown and aggressor—a stand-in for Western consumerism. Wasim often works in series to allow for individual works to express a single aspect of a larger narrative. This subtle layering of subject matter that allows for different readings based on perspective is a common feature of her paintings.

Ambreen Butt, Call Me Blasphemy, 2011, paper on tea stained paper, 57 x 78 inches
Faiza Butt, One series, 2012, light box triptych consisting of three ink and acrylic drawings on durations process film
Murad Khan Mumtaz, Revelation, 2011, opaque watercolor on wasli paper, 11 x 8 inches
Saira Wasim, I am loving it, 2010, gouache, graphite, and silver leaf on wasli paper, 31.5 x 24.5 inches