





"HIATUS"

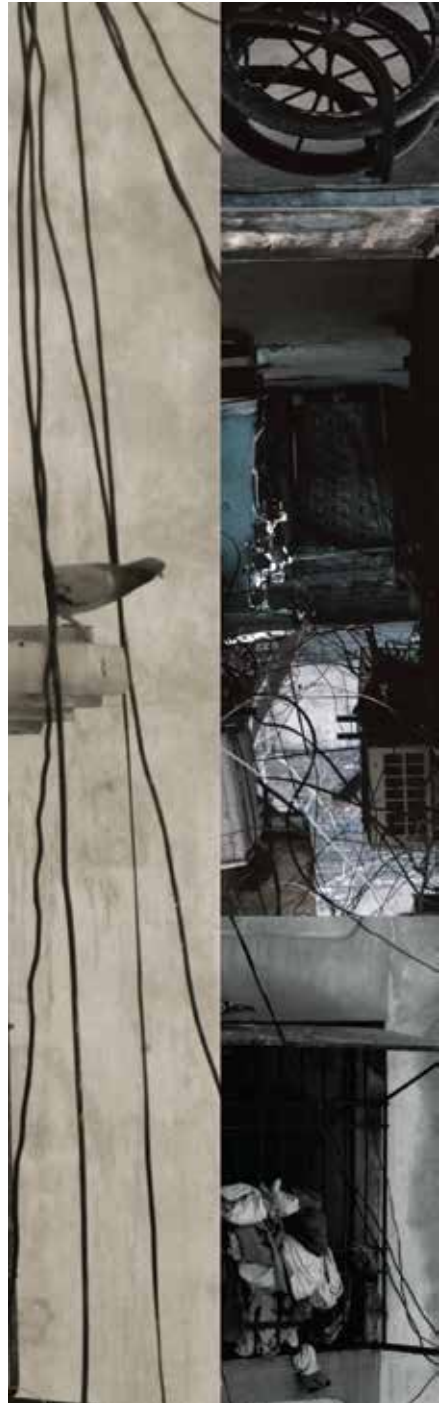
Works by Ramla Fatima

Curated by Muhammad Zeeshan

The work on view explores the artist's particular ability to describe and convey a sense of visual absence of human body and its identity, as evident from the title of the exhibition "HIATUS" which refers to "a missing part". Whether referencing an immediately identifiable figure or one that is conceptual and abstract, each work encourages the viewers to contemplate - or decipher - the physical context in which it was made. Ramla's prints appear to be abstract compositions, metaphorical of displaced human beings. Avoiding traditional compositions, many of the settings in which figures are posed right next to the unorthodox landscape, lush close up of grasses, unobstructed domestic interior views of her city's apartments into a hallucinatory technicolour realm.

Furthermore, certain images provide such an oblique reference to places that the viewer is left to imagine and reconstruct the picture's specific coordinates, framed by an impenetrable darkness.

Muhammad Zeeshan



“Who is counting..?”

Sehrish Mustafa

You and I are here, right now, knowing we *exist*.

With all of the power of knowing and the sense of being alive, we encompass within us every breath of our existence. Barcoded and labeled, enduring and enlacing the perimeters of our existence and taking leaps of breaths before taking another. It is yours and mine, the time and space, with what we are evolving in and with; hoping to spawn our identities into much larger and better versions of what could be. What could it be?

We are born innocent, the sense of right and wrong, to know or not to know and the extensions of it are all man made inventions. What isn't a man-made invention is the sense of belonging to a relation, no matter how anonymous it may stand.

Ramla Fatima with her first solo show at Sanat Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan goes on to bare the discipline much similar in her artworks. Titled as Hiatus, her series of collective layered digital prints voyage the surreal collages that bring together what you and I fear and hope. We all lie in mysteries that even we are unaware of, yet go on to finding answers we may never, only to satisfy what yearns the human mind. The artist breaks down the barriers of all knowing and brings forward what we lack or hide, the idea and the strength to unveil what makes us or destroys us. The constant rendition and association with the missing person in her works are the identities that you and I have lost, a soul perhaps.

Her digital manipulations are sorrow filled celebrations of what we are persistently undergoing. They showcase the absence present within them. The hypnagogic ambience of these images ironically engages us in a more relatable manner, clustering the seen memories to evoke what dreads and concerns us. Her trepidations seem to devour what lies in every beings heart, the despair of the absence of an identity. Its only human nature to fear, one which makes us veil what we know. What do we know? Will we ever know enough?



On hiatus IX, digital print on canvas, 66 x 48 cm, 2016



On hiatus X, digital print on canvas, 33 x 46 cm, 2016



Enduring these dreamlike images, Ramla essences the diminishing component and extends her concerns towards the extensions of decomposition of those lost identities. Capturing what even speaks the gist of or for a being, she compounds the found objects to render the sense of existence within misplaced, evoking many to cringe.

“Nothing whets the intelligence more than a passionate suspicion, nothing develops all the faculties of an immature mind more than a trail running away into the dark.”

- Stefan Zweig, *The Burning Secret* and other stories

Passionate suspicion? Unaccountable and unaccounted queries that we all want the justification to, yet what can ever justify or rationalize the tactility of losing a character we could ever define so greatly, even more than our individuality?

Ramla's much empathetic and known selection of images engrave the vocabulary and nucleus of mystery, violence, beauty, hope, fear, all summed up in an audible memorial vessel. Midst these rustic artworks lies a much profound narrative, a sequence of a sort that we witness in the time we are alive, the recitations that the artist attains to are the repetitions of echoes of a not a much stranger creature, that she makes us all relate to and the embedded voices we are all surrounded by.

Revisiting and reliving the left in the lurch, the artist decides to transcript and further translate what we once yearned over with her *sotto voce*, that once we screamed.

Alongside the experience, an audio piece resides the gallery, allowing the viewers to get a better substance of what Ramla speaks of. These words and *speeches* that we have become accustomed to, makes us to take a moment from ourselves to hear the description of who once existed. The chaos that lies in our minds is something that we cannot forego, and the one that keeps on building and burdening the souls of the lost.



On hiatus XII, digital print on canvas, 63 x 43 cm, 2016



On hiatus XI, digital print on canvas, 33 x 46 cm, 2016

چرل پینا فضول بیٹو

بجلم P.S.P.

رسالہ



On hiatus III, digital print on canvas, 46 x 104 cm, 2016

The artist does not simply imply the tragedies that we have become a part of but rather interprets the negative anonymous charms we are left with their departing. They hypocrite the phenomena and bury them under, it is you and I that are left with metaphorical alluring and eventually yearn for glimpses of what once was, similar to what Ramla has layered. What can't be cured, must be endured.

As much contradistinctive her work may seem, the series that she had wrought out are all notions of unpublished mysteries. Her complied juxtapositions of the surroundings leash us to a world full of cryptic dilemmas.

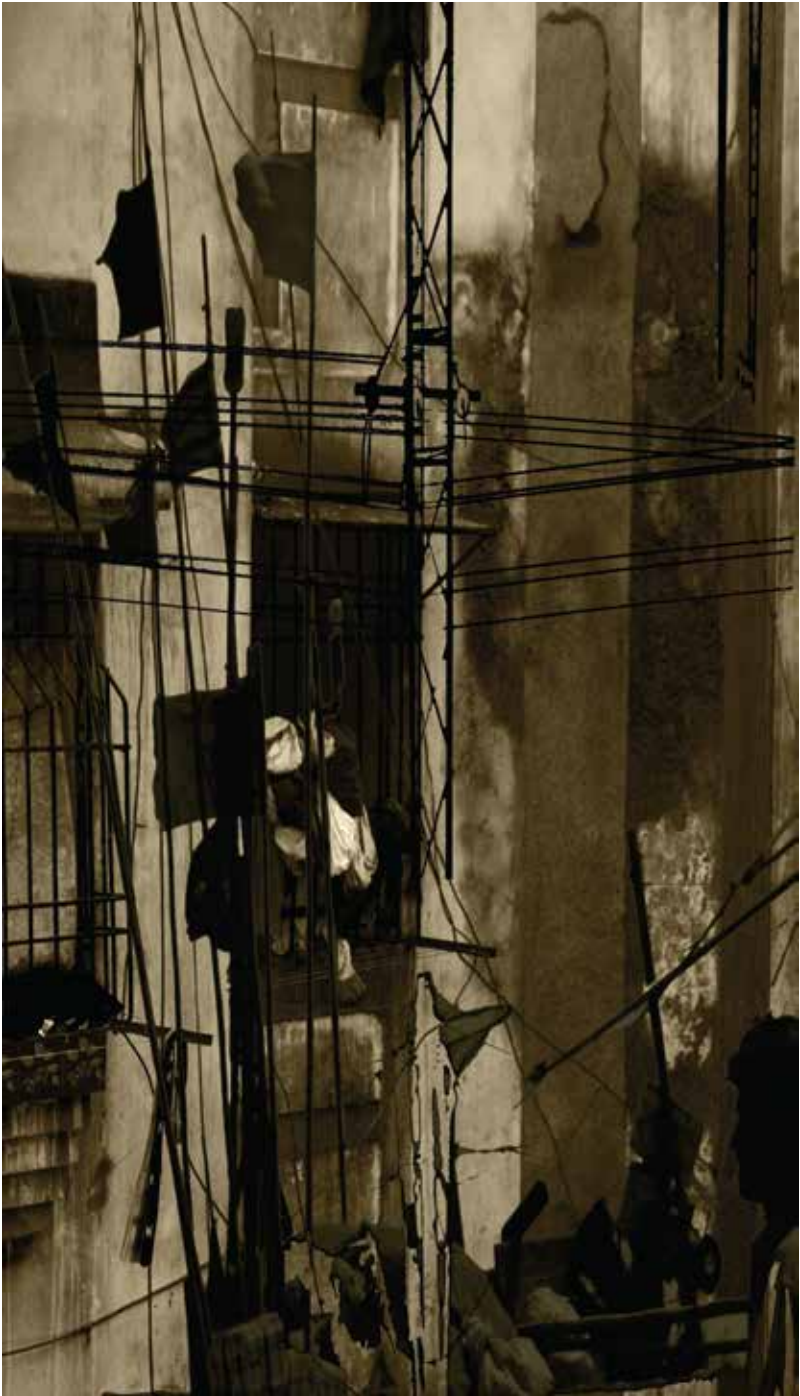


I had always known the sky was full of secrecies, but not until now had I realized how occupied of them the earth is. Devour what we may know, to avoid the forsaken distress that may come with. It is the hush-hush of the world that all things exist and do not die, but withdraw a little from sight and afterwards return yet again.

This individual has attempted to wrought out what lies within each and every one of us in the most honest of images. What perhaps intrigues me is how the artist has managed to attain to the dismay of decomposition with utmost prurience that still molds together a much yielding preposition. Her work solely invites the eye to rely on your own interpretation, judgment and experience



On hiatus VIII, digital print on canvas, 93 x 53 cm, 2016



On hiatus VII, digital print on canvas, 63 x 36 cm, 2016

to her artistic speculations.

The manipulation of wires alongside abandoned structures with hints of birds are all metaphorically engaging where once something had existed and is now amongst these remembering. This Familiarity Effect, where we prefer that which is familiar to us, makes loss more difficult, and if we mislay what we are by this time familiar with, we have to go through the spiteful process of getting acquainted with unfamiliar things. The phenomena in the pattern of searching, one loses itself. Ramla in one of her such pieces spreads a ray of dead fish emerging from the head of an anonymous identity and heading towards a mystical river, surrounded by rustic textured setting. Dead fish are symbolic of a loss of power or wealth by an individual thus we are only as strong as we think we are, unaware of the wilderness of sadness that will carry our burden, similar to the anticipation of the future that she denotes. Neither has she addressed or attained to a particularity of a certain loss neither does she co-side with what it may interpret to an individual, it's just the matter of the relatable complications, that incalculable amongst us are abiding to and are now aware of - on a superficial level.

The deteriorating of the absent identities is enough for us to create thoughtful speculations of what the future may behold for us. There is and never will be any loss greater than the one of losing *the one*. Curiosity has its own reasoning of existing, one which if you question will only endeavor you to get more curious! Ramla embarked her series on revealing and unwrapping the secrets, distress, dismay and the anticipations that we all live with in association with one another. Our psychological mechanisms make us dread over the pain, yet with time the similar tends to heal and rectify us in a much bizarre manner. The pain becomes a memory and what we are left with are the illusory images and precedents of what we once grieved over, and soon noises are no more *noises*. Does the human mind make it fair? For us to heal with time? Will we ever heal for that matter? Should we even heal?



On hiatus I, digital print on canvas, 47 x 50 cm, 2016



On hiatus II, digital print on canvas, 46 x 61 cm, 2016

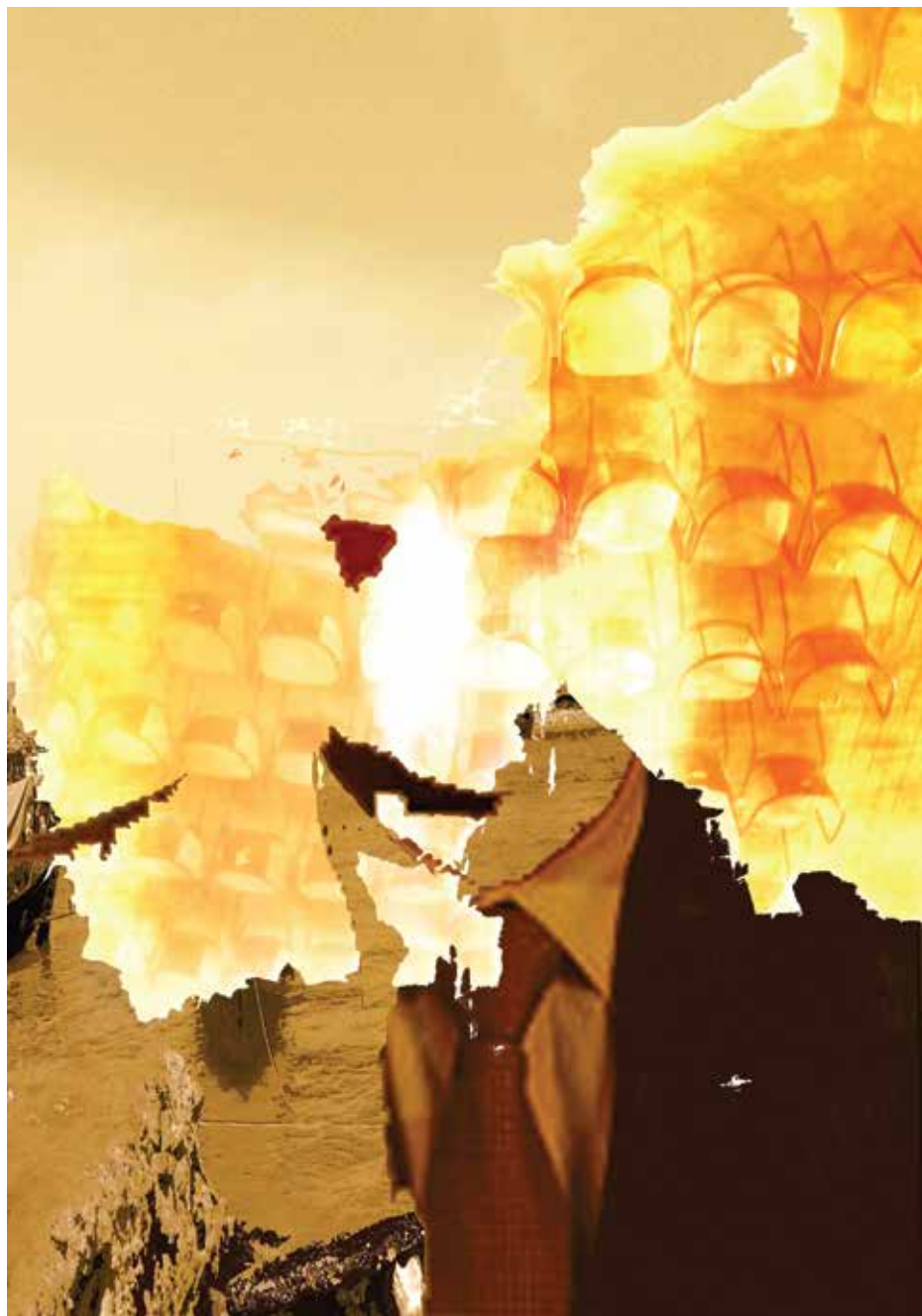
The amalgamation of these nostalgic memories and spaces no matter how vague and absurd they may seem is something which no one deny, neither is the ironic understanding one tends to develop by standing in front of these artworks. All art speaks for itself, no doubt Ramla!

In the time and age with all we are witnessing, it has become dreadful and heartbreaking to bear the losses, even though they may not be ours - so to speak. The expectations we have about our future comfort and cement our emotional reaction to forfeiture. One cannot help but be in reverence when he envisages the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous arrangement of reality.

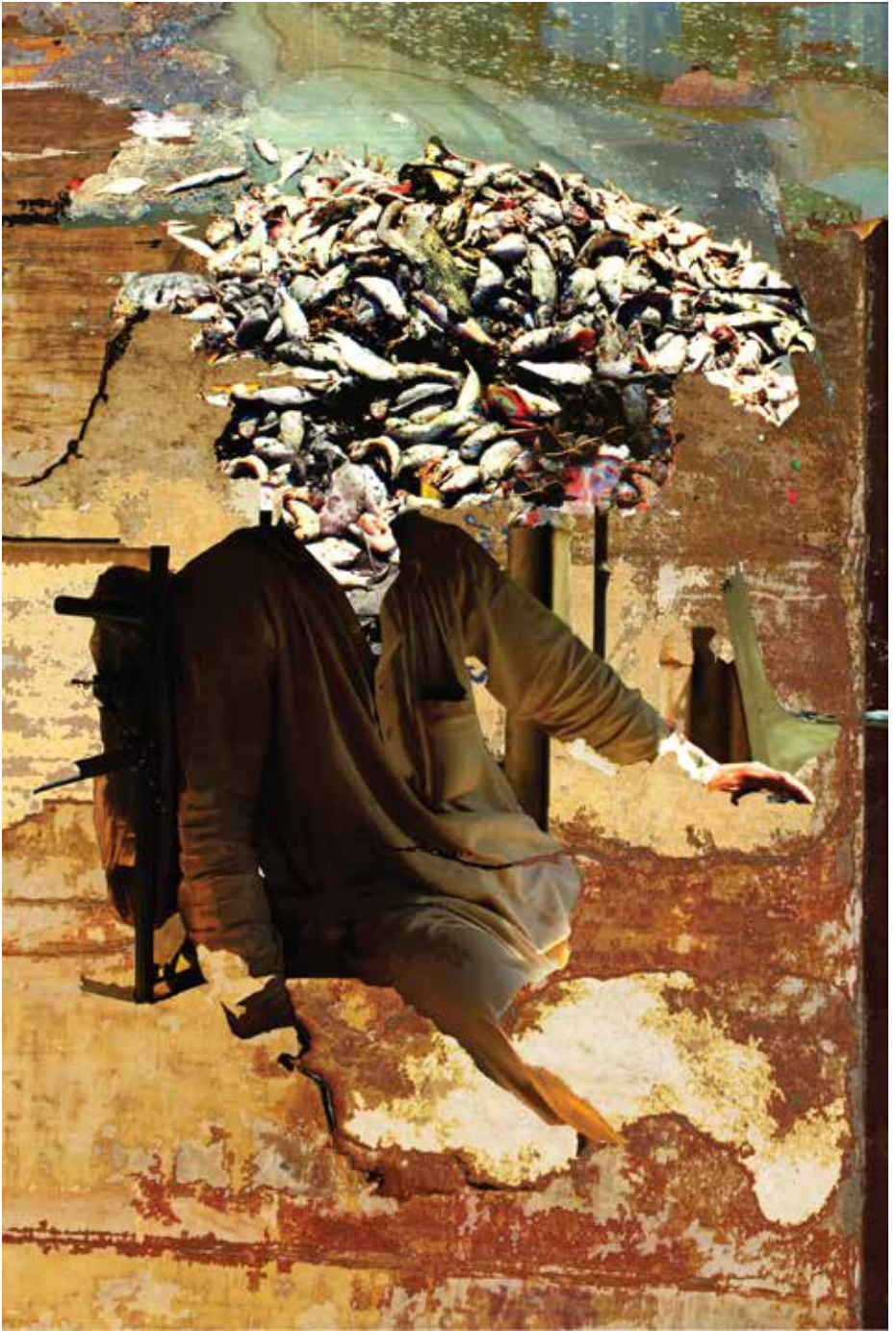
“Qui craint de souffrir, il souffre déjà de ce qu’il craint.”

A French proverb that perhaps I have understood long before even I knew what suffering really meant.

“Who fears to suffer, already suffers what he fears.”



On hiatus VI, digital print on canvas, 56 x 43 cm, 2016



On hiatus V, digital print on canvas, 65 x 43 cm, 2016

Artist's Statement

My work revolves around the visual absence of the human body with an emphasis on its identity. My work often focuses on divulging secrets and exploring fears and unfolds what lies within a person and without. I often make use of found objects altering little in order to allow the work to create its own

reality. My B.F.A thesis, addressed the swift transformation from assembling and reassembling of the body, its belongings and its possessions in various forms and content based on opposition of explosion and its remnants containing personal belongings. Each object was held together like the human body holds each organ together. My later sculptures and paintings have continued to enquire into this subject through the manipulation of new materials and techniques. In my recent body of work, found and staged images with the names, features and indications of missing Pakistani citizens are subject to intense re-working through an arbitrary combination of digital manipulation, collage and a diversity of printing processes; the visual information build and layered to achieve highly structured chaos. The work shows a sensitive understanding of forgotten histories and personalities which seem to evaporate in big cities like Karachi. I tend to leave the viewer in suspense about what is truly happening or about what the future has in store. I explore and represent what most people conceal.



Biography

I was born in Taxila, Pakistan in the early nineties and studied fine arts at National College of Arts. I majored in sculpture and graduated in 2015. My recent exhibitions include "Garden of Making" at Swiss Embassy, Islamabad, "Thick Thin Skin" at V.M Gallery, Karachi, "Merachi" at Galletry 39K, Lahore, "Beyond the Facade" at Serena Business Club, Islamabad and "Thesis Show 2015" at National Art Gallery, Islamabad. I have participated in three artist residencies namely B.Q Residency, Pakistan, 8th Vasi Taza Tareen Residency, Pakistan and RFIOW Residency, Canada. My work has been reviewed and discussed in national and international publications.

This catalogue accompanies the exhibition

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