

INNOCENCE
TO EXPERIENCE

WHITE WALL
GALLERY

Rehana Mangi
Sana Zaidi

ABOUT US:

White Wall intends to showcase the art practice of some of the most influential artists today and contribute to scholarship by producing catalogues and eventually books to accompany exhibitions.

We aim to invite artists with sustained practices, prominent curators, historians and writers to collaborate and promote research and address the wider discourse on art, its prevalence, evolution and role in our lives. Taking this purpose forward, workshops will be conducted by our exhibiting artists with the purpose of actively contributing to education, connection, inclusion and collaboration with the multiple layers of our communal ecology.

BIOGRAPGHY - Rehana Mangi

Visual practitioner and Contemporary miniaturist Rehana Mangi is based in Lahore, and teaching as an Assistant Professor at the prestigious National college of Arts Lahore. she was born in 1986 in Larkana Sindh Pakistan and graduated from the National College of Arts (NCA) Lahore with her Bachelor's Degree of Fine Arts (BFA), and receiving Distinction in 2008. And done with Masters in Art and Design (MA ADS) from Beacon-House national University, receiving honours and continues to produce work as an Artist.

Mangi has taken part in various Solo and Group shows around the globe, her works are part of important private collections across three continents. Mangi's miniature based works involve drawing, painting, collage, needlework, embroidery and most intriguingly human hair. Her art practice is notable for the high level of intricate work, which involves cross-stitch.

She did her first Solo exhibition in Paris at the Alix Renard gallery in 2010, "Mashq: an Endless Lust, at Green Cardamom, London, UK. she has shown her work at the first Lahore Biennial 01, at summer palace, Lahore fort in 2018. She is recipient of Art fund new collection award by Whitworth the University of Manchester in 2021, has been nominated for sovereign Asia Art Prize in 2014-15. And she has been nominated for the prestigious Jameel Prize in 2011. She has taken part in various important group exhibitions such as Group show at MEWO Kunsthalle, Memmingen, Germany in 2014. Beyond the page, The Miniature as Attitude in contemporary art from Pakistan, Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, CA. 2010. Drawn from Life" Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal Cumbria, UK 2011. "Reprise" Aicon Gallery, New York. 2010. "Mere Humd(r)um" Aicon Gallery, New York, 2012. "Mashq: repetition, meditation, mediation, Green Cardamom, London, UK. 2009. She has shown in art fairs as well, LE PERMENEUTE –MDL– The Windmill, Milan Italy (Art Fair) 2009, Emerge Gallery, Paris at international Art fair, Central Harbourfront, Hong Kong 2015.

Innocence to Experience

My works are very personal, drawing upon my memories as a child growing up in a Pakistani village. Inherited from my grandmother, I have a habit of unconsciously collecting fallen hair, in order to prevent "Black magic" (a supernatural evil power which is often practiced on human hair). In the final year at my college, I was losing a lot of hair due to some stressful circumstances. During that period, I became detached from my surroundings. In order to counter my depression. I first started drawing minute grids as a therapeutic activity. Later, I began waiving my hair into the wasli to commemorate illness as well as my village's tradition for weaving. and once again I started practicing "Cross-stitch", a form of counted thread embroidery that I had learnt when I was twelve years old and immensely enjoyed practicing.

My artworks soon took on a life of their own, recalling my fantasies, Dreams and memories, and blending these into surreal dreamscape. My work is totally depiction of the truth within me, it is resilient, contemporary and the paths and hardships all endured by in the course of my life have all been moulded and refined to manifest the intricacy of my work.

It is a complex technique in which every stitch and pattern created is counted and calculated. I started using hair as metaphor of loss and death. And I picked colourful patterns from my childhood memories like flowers and butterflies stitched on pillow covers back in my village Larkana. I started to stitch these patterns on wasli paper using the fallen hair. I was already collecting my fallen hair to avoid the probability of black magic as per my cultural belief so it lead me to this idea of giving them a beautiful shape and making them useful again. The idea thus incorporated a meticulous process such as making grids, punching holes and then stitching of the fallen hair.

Circles are important form in Islamic geometry, where they become symbol of totality and unity of the universe, I create a multitude of circles that revolve around each other.

Rehana Mangi

Artist

BIOGRAPGHY - Sana Zaidi

Sana Zaidi, (b.1992), is an artist and educator based between Rawalpindi and Lahore. She graduated with a BFA from the National College of Arts in 2017, specialising in Miniature painting. She has exhibited her work widely in Pakistan's leading galleries and also internationally, such as at Shakir Ali Museum, Alhamra Lahore, Satrang Gallery, Chateau de Cogny in France, and many others. She has been teaching at the National College of Arts since 2018.

Innocence to Experience

My work has always revolved around relationships and how they influence and affect my consciousness. Many years ago, I came across some poems written by my late grandfather, in which he penned down his hopes and aspirations for the next generation. His writings affected me deeply, and inspired me to start writing also. I began to express my thoughts and most intrinsic desires through my poems and eventually, the rhythmic verses transformed into pulsing tides and flowing currents in my paintings.

In the recent past, I experienced what I initially perceived to be a 'disastrous accident', when my younger son scribbled all over one of my paintings, which consisted of calm, whispering waves made with layers of precise and intricately written poems. His carefree scribbles contrasted strongly with the meticulous details of my work, where not a speck was unintended or accidental, and no mark existed without my conscious intention. The juxtaposition of two such opposing expressions was hard to swallow, but also sparked a liberating sort of inspiration.

Trained in miniature intricacies, I initially struggled to accept this unconventional collaboration. However, embracing what I initially deemed to be chaos, led to unexpected breakthroughs and introspection. Now, instead of seeking for a dedicated workspace for myself, I invite my children to participate in my creative process. Their carefree and at times accidental marks have become integral to my practise.

This shift has taught me to embrace unpredictability and find beauty in imperfection. My works includes the drawings and scribbles of my children, at times physically and at times in spirit. Keeping the intricacies of miniature painting in mind I use the fine pen and repedo as my medium on archival paper to express my sentiments as a parent, whilst also documenting moments and memories that have had a great impact on my life.

Sana Zaidi

Artist

Innocence to Experience - Aasim Akhtar

Drawing is a deceptively complex word. Most people drew in childhood, though often so subconsciously that it needs its own special term: doodling. Must mark-making be planned and controlled, or can a drawing be made with arbitrary marks achieved randomly through chance. Or if there's no applied medium, such as ink or watercolour, graphite, charcoal or pastel, and the work is created using paper by piercing holes, folding, tearing or burning or, for that matter, stitching, can this still be called a drawing? Sana Zaidi and Rehana Mangi challenge the complex interplay of cognitive, somatic and material conventions that define drawing today. They consider the tensions that exist in drawing between blankness and trace, its multifaceted identity and fundamentally relational character, and reflect on how drawing responds to the temporalities that structure our everyday life. It used to be commonplace to consider drawing as a daily practice. In everyday life, we afford drawing a place in the continuum of activities that go almost unnoticed, from telephone scribbles to the ubiquitous children's drawings so often brought up as the paradigm of accidental meaning

Rehana Mangi's minimal and meditative drawings are object-lessons in patience and control. She began honing her craft in Larkana, Sindh at a young age, and gained an acute understanding of the properties of shadow, weight and volume. The 'rules' of her practice place her in a lineage of artists who choose to liberate their creativity by setting themselves limitations. Fallen hair woven into concentric shapes reverberate like perfectly formed expressive marks, as if strokes have been frozen in time. The careful manipulation of the circle, and the astonishing spatial illusion it produces, is reminiscent of the Op art movement. In her work, space is as much a formal property as it is a means of expressing emotional states of being. To follow the undulations of light and depth is to find oneself immersed in silent contemplation

An infinity of fine lines set within circles, creates an optical allure and sense of vibration that saturate the sublime works of Mangi on wasli. The arrangement and visual order form a placating composition that inspires infinite calm. The emotional bearings the work and the choice of material hold can be both spiritual and ritualistic, allowing her to heed her lived experiences. A continuity in the repetition of shapes encourages meditation, while the

absolute symmetry and meticulous detail generate a spiritual energy. Circles, twisted swirls and rectilinear lines neatly cross-stitched into paper recall the repetitive details in Islamic tiles and mosaics.

To Rehana Mangi, the process feels monastic. Indeed, since time immemorial, drawing has served as a vital tool of self-healing and centering, linked undoubtedly to its foundation in the act of touch. She feels a chorus in her space of solitude – a collective presence. Her chorus includes her memories of her grandmother who taught her to embroider in cross stitch as a young woman coming of age. She enlists drawing with human hair both as a way of diagramming and charting terrains – through weaving and knotting her hair, she braids the past, creating a formal vocabulary that reinterprets abstract geometries on her own terms.

What political ethos follows from the democratic partitioning of a circle into equal constituent sectors? Rehana Mangi's meticulous drawings imbue geometric abstraction with a meditative resonance that instigates these kinds of far-reaching, associative questions.

Her predominantly small, tight drawings mine geometry's metaphorical and metaphysical possibilities. Their intimate but carefully measured aesthetic of mathematical precision seems to express an entire worldview premised on rigorous, hand-crafted order. When she generates vibrational fields that pulse within their bounds, luminosity accrues. But the strong affinity that her repetitive mark-making shares with manual craft aligns itself closest with textiles. Stitching and embroidering inform Mangi's drawings both on the micro level of texture and line and on the macro level of overall pattern and composition.

Between its reality as material mark and its mimetic responsibility in the creation of the visual fiction of the image, the drawn line exists, like the surface on which it is applied, in potentia. Movement is necessarily enacted as we follow the course of a line over a page, or as we read the haptic ambition of

the drawing hand, the repeated attempt to reach the object, to secure it for the grasp. It is this kind of unresolvable ambition that the artist **Sana Zaidi** enacts, as she presents drawing to search ceaselessly without presuming to find. Learning to draw is teaching yourself how to see, as Cecily Brown reminds us.

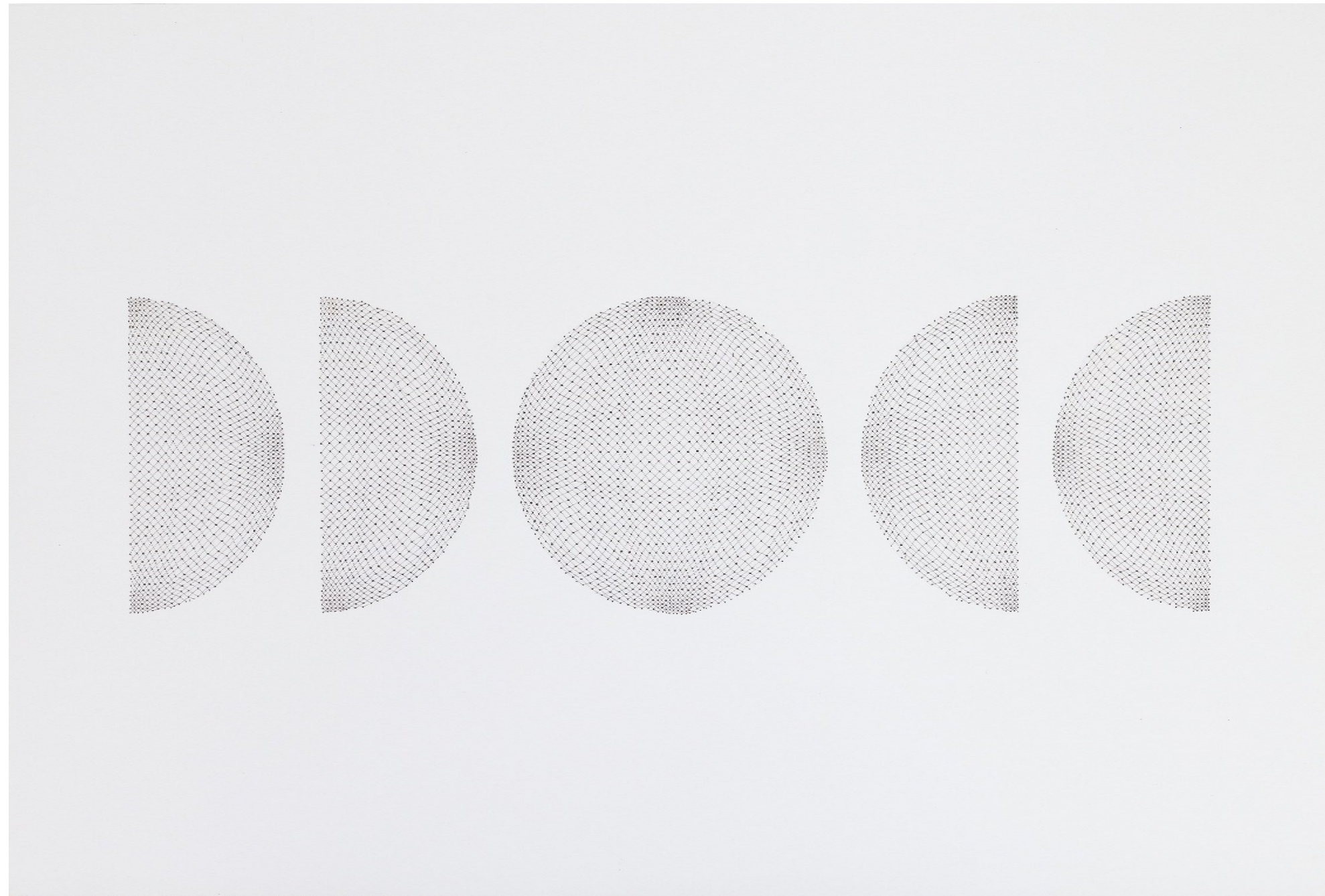
Zaidi's work, born out of a collaboration of sorts with her unschooled children deny coherence by offering fragmentary moments that subtly alter our perception. The drawings, some furiously scribbled and scrawled or scored, represent a torrent of subconscious energy all the more concentrated for their creation within the tightly confined space of the paper. These free-range drawings by young children stand for unrestricted expression – outside pedagogy, although, ironically produced by the artist's children; individual, yet part of a seemingly collective project. The results have an irresistible vivacity, authenticity and charm. Some are playful, whimsical or humorous, others agitated expressions of pent-up frustration. Drawing, as it appears, became especially important for Sana Zaidi as a way to channel her anxiety and restless energy.

Whereas drawing's nature can be defined as a universal human endeavour, a shared visual language of expression, Sana Zaidi also uses drawing to pragmatically sketch her own maps and plans, and dream in doodles and scribbles by her children. What begins in spurts and fits, with false starts and unclear endings are valued for their immediacy, for the insights they offer in child psychology into the process of the creative act, and for their intimacy and directness; in other words, in drawings Zaidi seeks truth, not power. She states that her grandfather's poetry inspired her to write poems that configured as drawings on paper. It was only when her younger son 'defaced' her drawings with innocent scribbles and scrawls (what she initially saw as an accident) that she began to see the uncanny juxtaposition and overlap not as an accident but as improvisation, giving birth to a suite that she baptised as *Mama and Us*, *I Love my Mom and Dad*, *Birthday Card*, etc.

Though the range of work presented in Innocence to Experience is astonishing, due to the difference in materials and art forms the artists have employed, what is ultimately most intriguing – and perplexing – are the interrelationships among the two principal bodies of work. The categories that may be employed to classify their production may range to every rubric used to situate the work of autodidacts whose practices lie outside the art world's mainstream network. This litany of concepts – primitive, visionary, art brut, outsider, selftaught and folk – corresponds to the twentieth century's attempts to deal with the work of the socially marginalised creators. However, many of these terms can be deeply problematic in the case of Sana Zaidi and Rehana Mangi. Coined to reflect notions of the innocent and naïve, primitive and transgressive, which this art can be held to embody, these appellations suggest how autodidacts came to serve as models for professional artists who sought to unlearn conventions and formulations inculcated during their academic training. In an art world whose pantheon now includes several luminaries, the work of so-called outsiders finds immediate points of reference with dominant idioms rather than providing alternatives to current conventions. Sublimating such polemics, the laconic title of the present show may indicate not only a wish to avoid pigeonholing the artists' work in what can be contentious, even ghettoising, categories but also an attempt to place the work on par with that of any other accomplished practitioner.

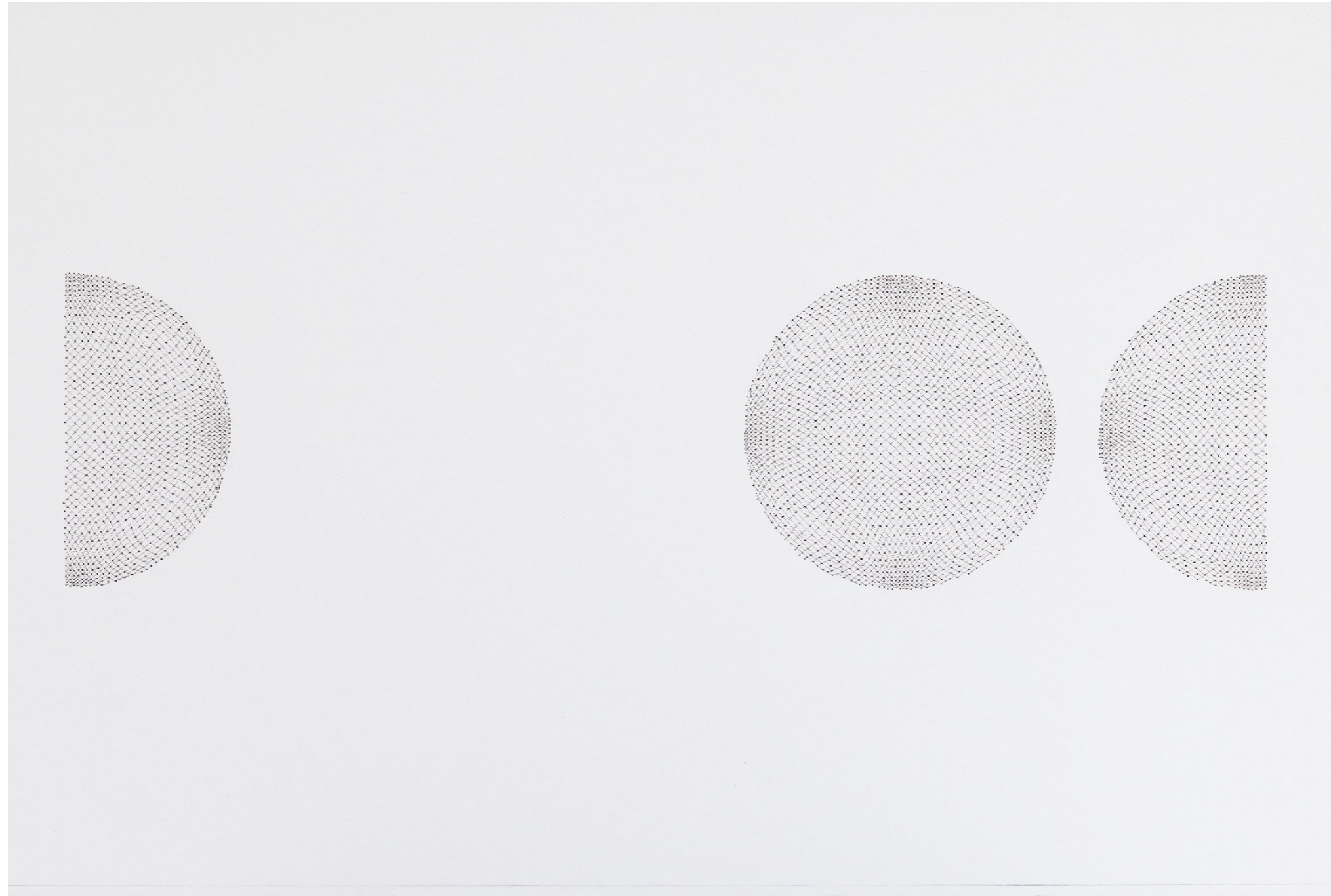
Aasim Akhtar
05.2025

Rehana Mangi



Intersecting Memories I | Human hair on archival paper | 2025 | 12.9'' x 18.9'' (33 x 48 cm)

Rehana Mangi



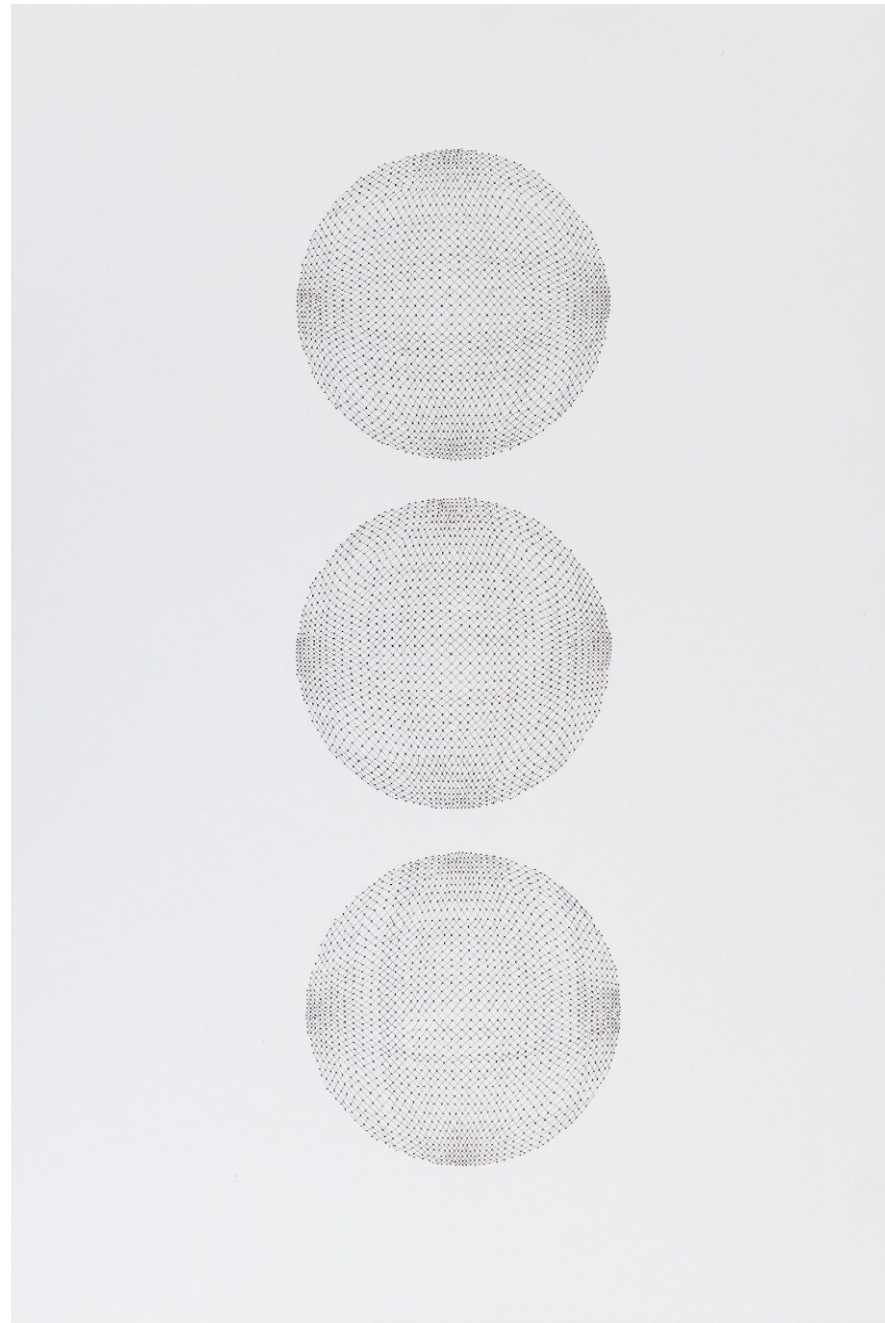
Intersecting Memories II | Human hair on archival paper | 2025 | 12.9" x 18.9" (33 x 48 cm)

Rehana Mangi



Intersecting Memories III | Human hair on archival paper | 2025 | 12.9" x 18.9" (33 x 48 cm)

Rehana Mangi



Intersecting Memories IV | Human hair on archival paper | 2025 | 18.9'' x 12.9'' (48 x 33 cm)

Rehana Mangi



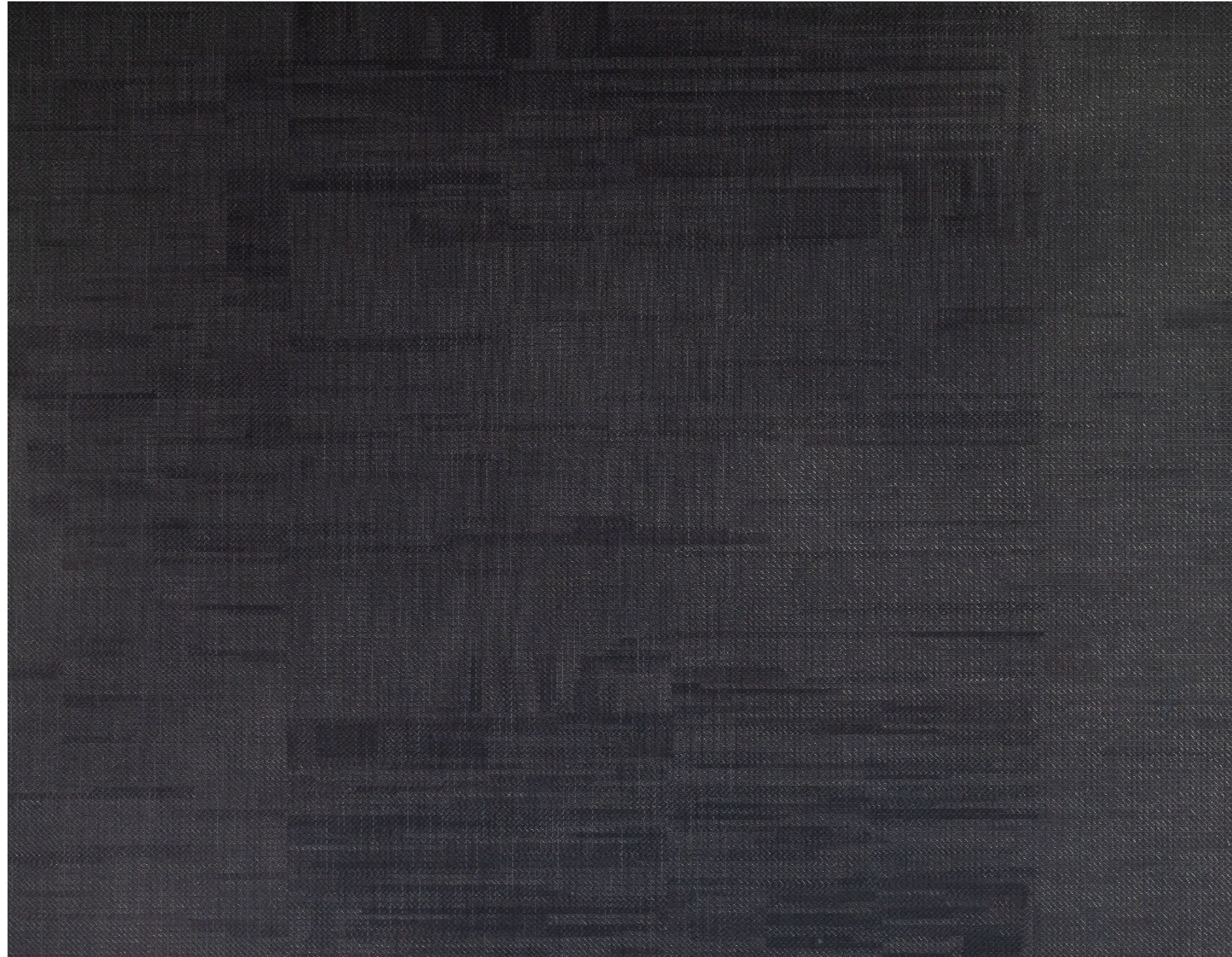
Silent Manuscript I | Human hair on archival paper | 2025 | 16.5" x 11.8" (42 x 30 cm)

Rehana Mangi



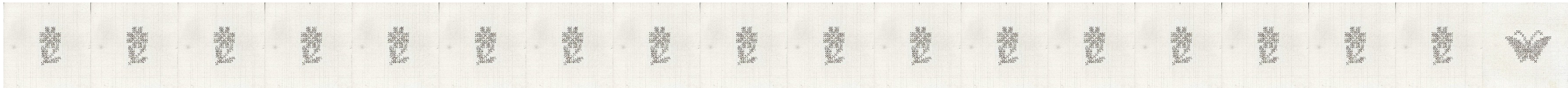
Silent Manuscript II | Human hair on archival paper | 2025 | 16.5'' x 11.8'' (42 x 30 cm)

Rehana Mangi



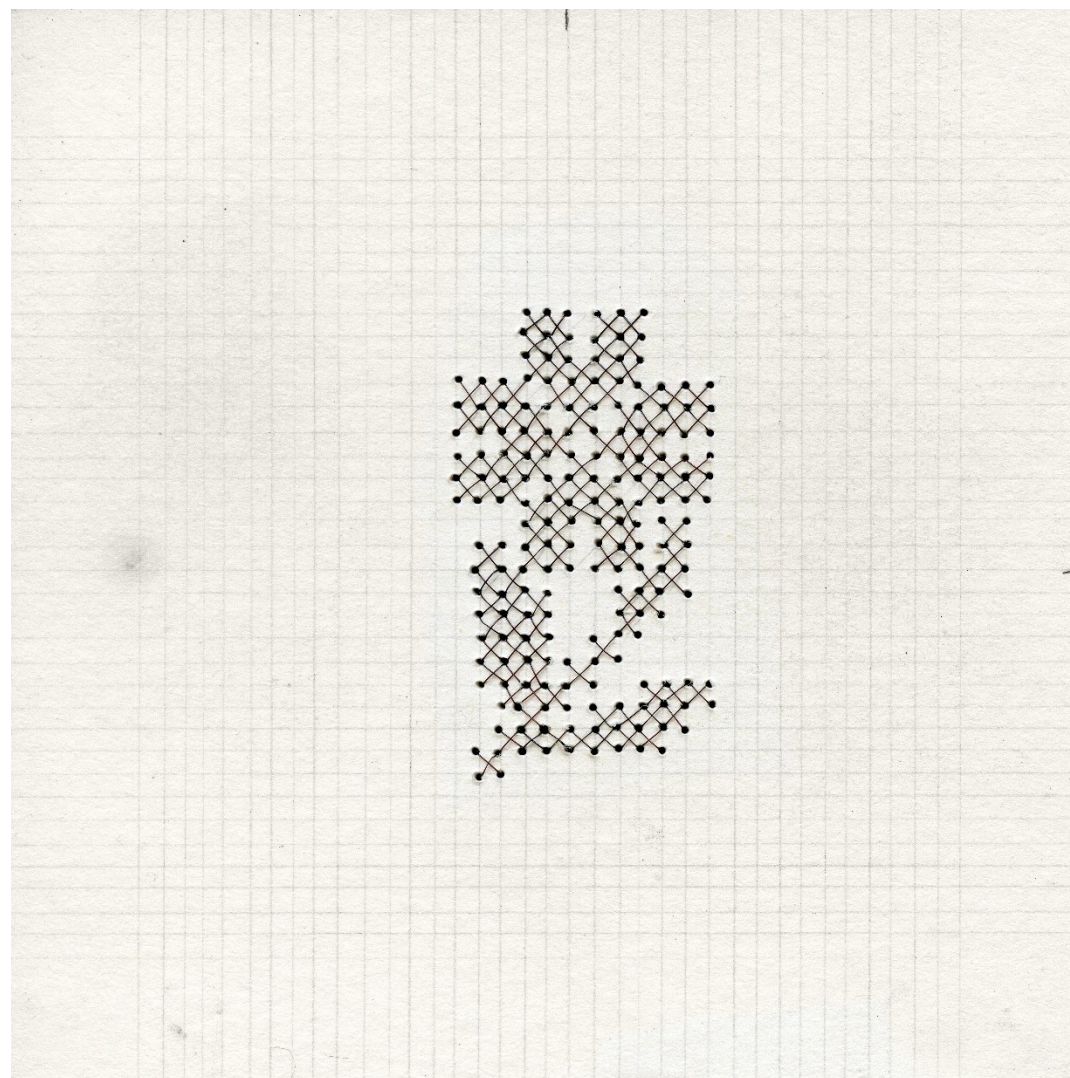
Silent Manuscript III | Human hair on Wasli | 2025 | 20.9'' x 26.9'' (53.2 x 68.5 cm)

Rehana Mangi



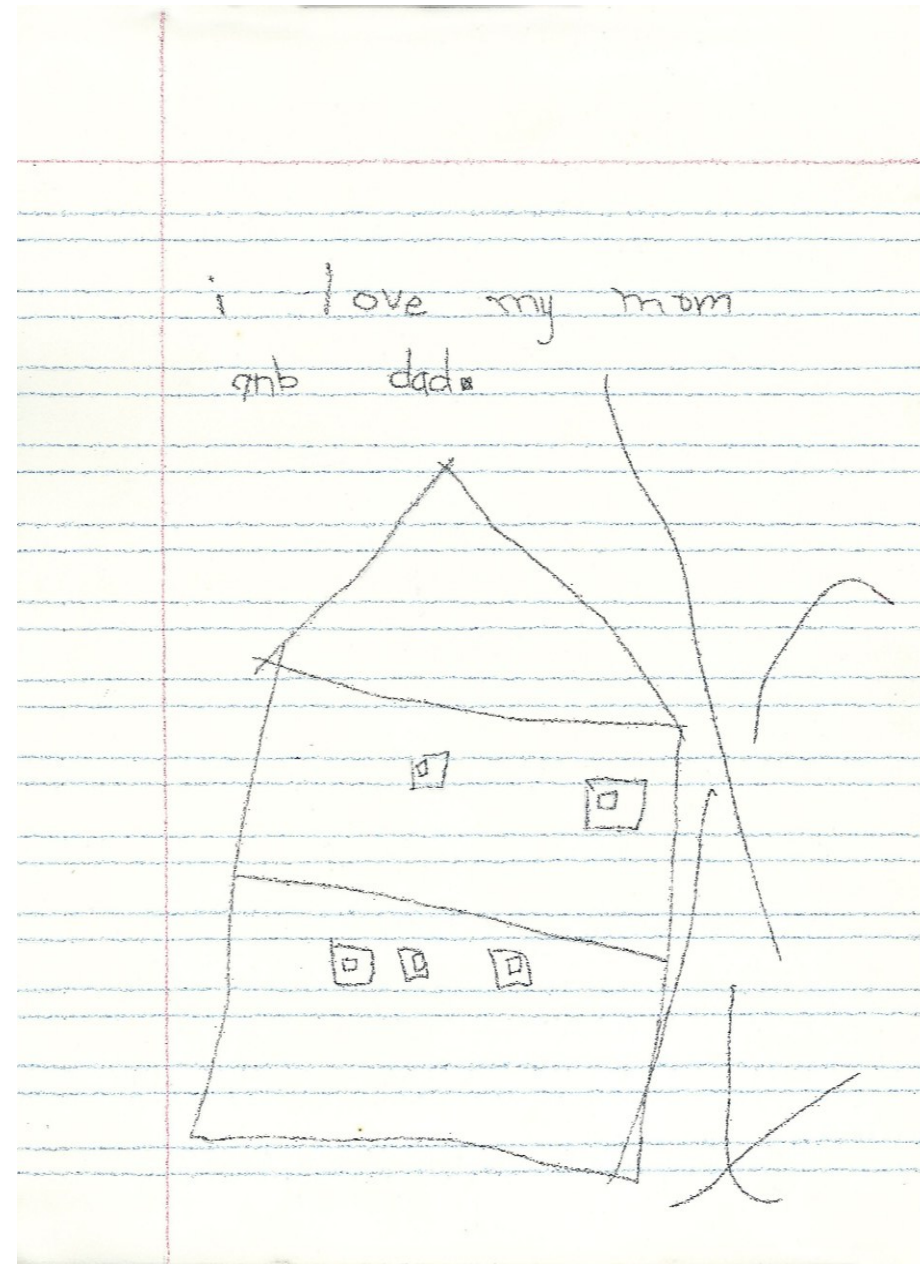
Memory Lane | Human hair on Wasli | 2025 | 3'' x 54'' (53.2 x 68.5 cm) | 3'' x 3'' (each)

Rehana Mangi



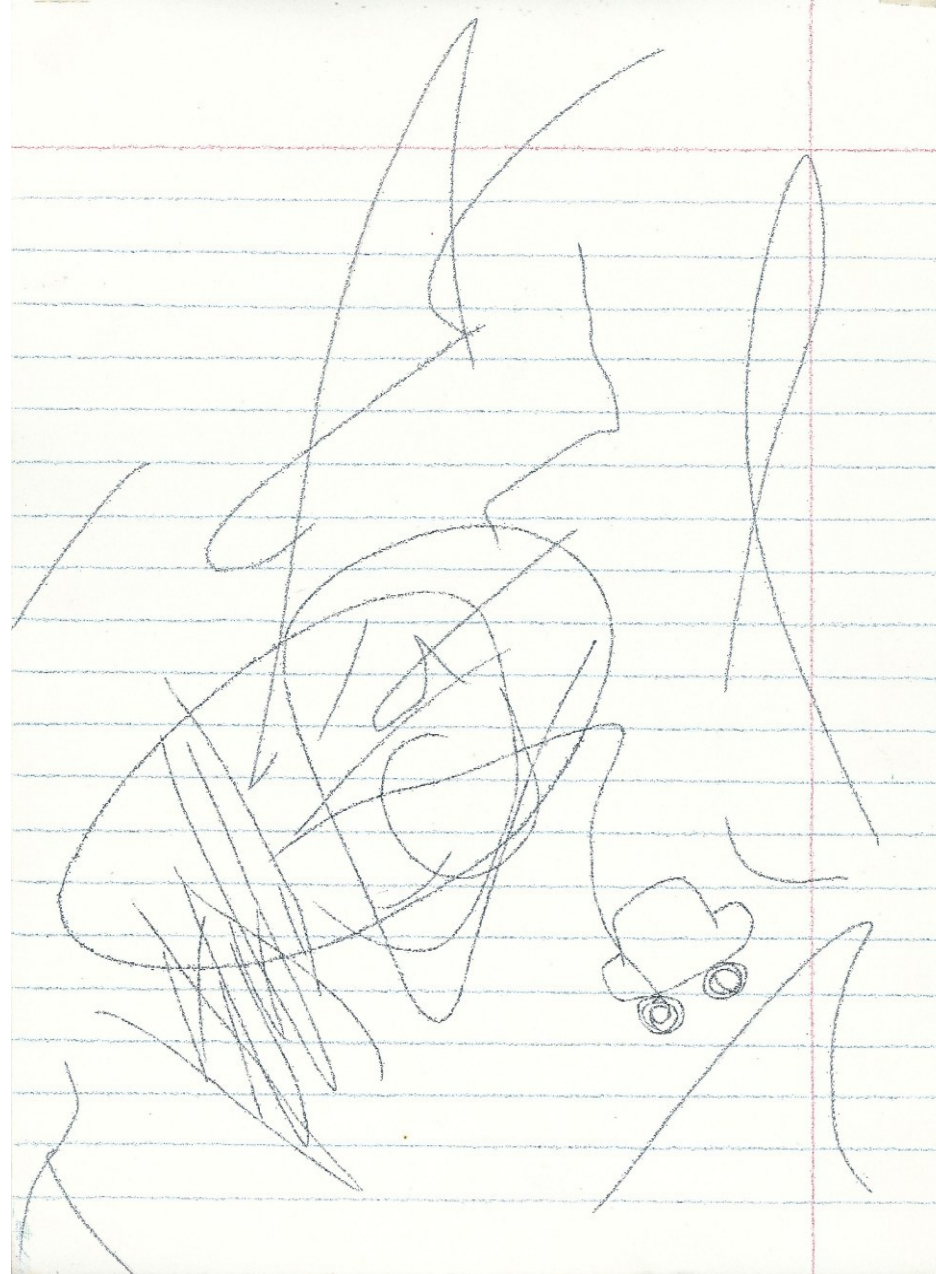
Memory Lane (in detail) | Human hair on Wasli | 2025 | 3'' x 54'' (53.2 x 68.5 cm) | 3'' x 3'' (each)

Sana Zaidi



I love my mom and dad | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12" x 9" (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



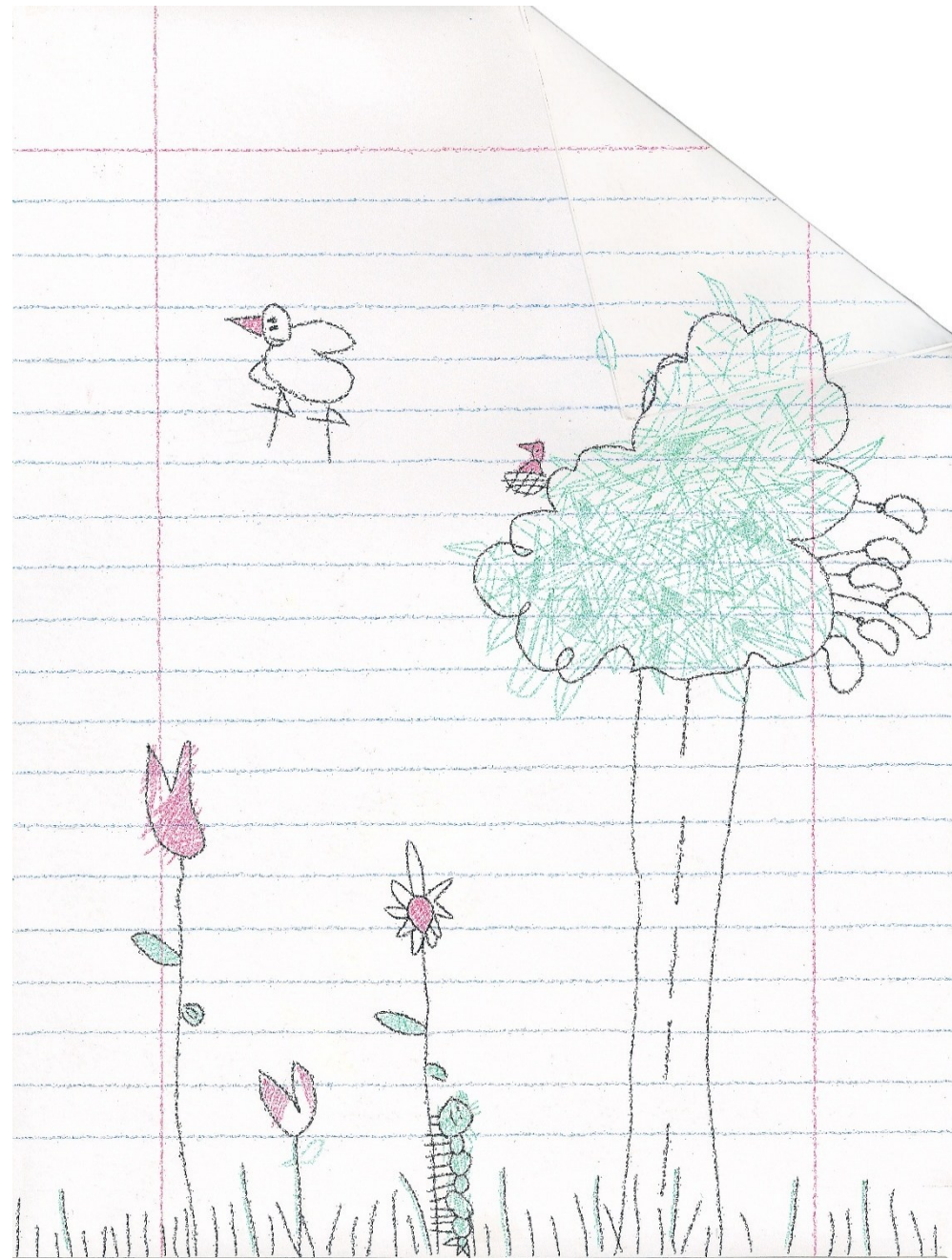
Urdu | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12'' x 9'' (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



Outing on a rainy day | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12" x 9" (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



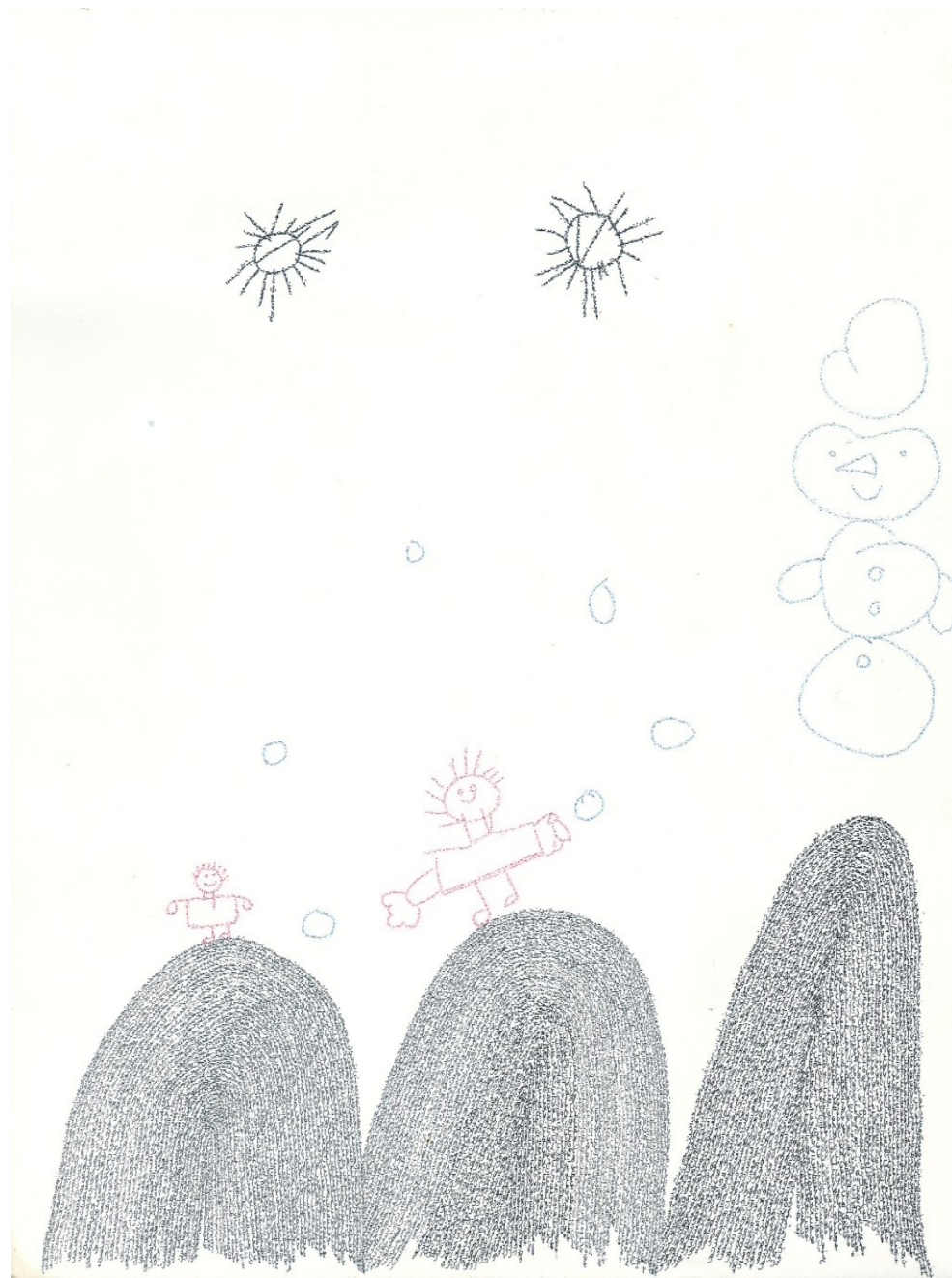
If I was a mango tree | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12" x 9" (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



To the moon, we go | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12" x 9" (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



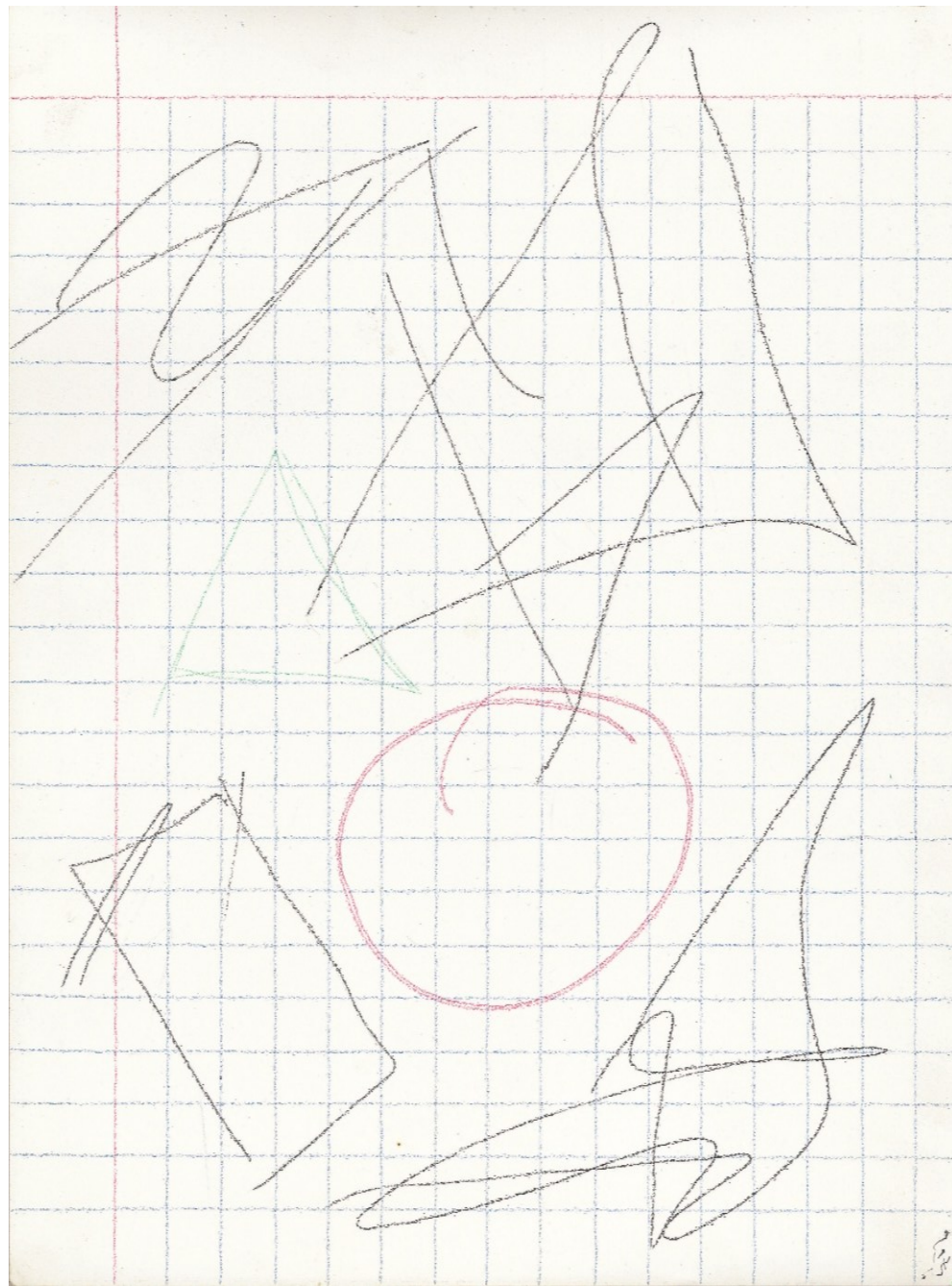
Snow mountains and us | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12'' x 9'' (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



Everyday... | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12" x 9" (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



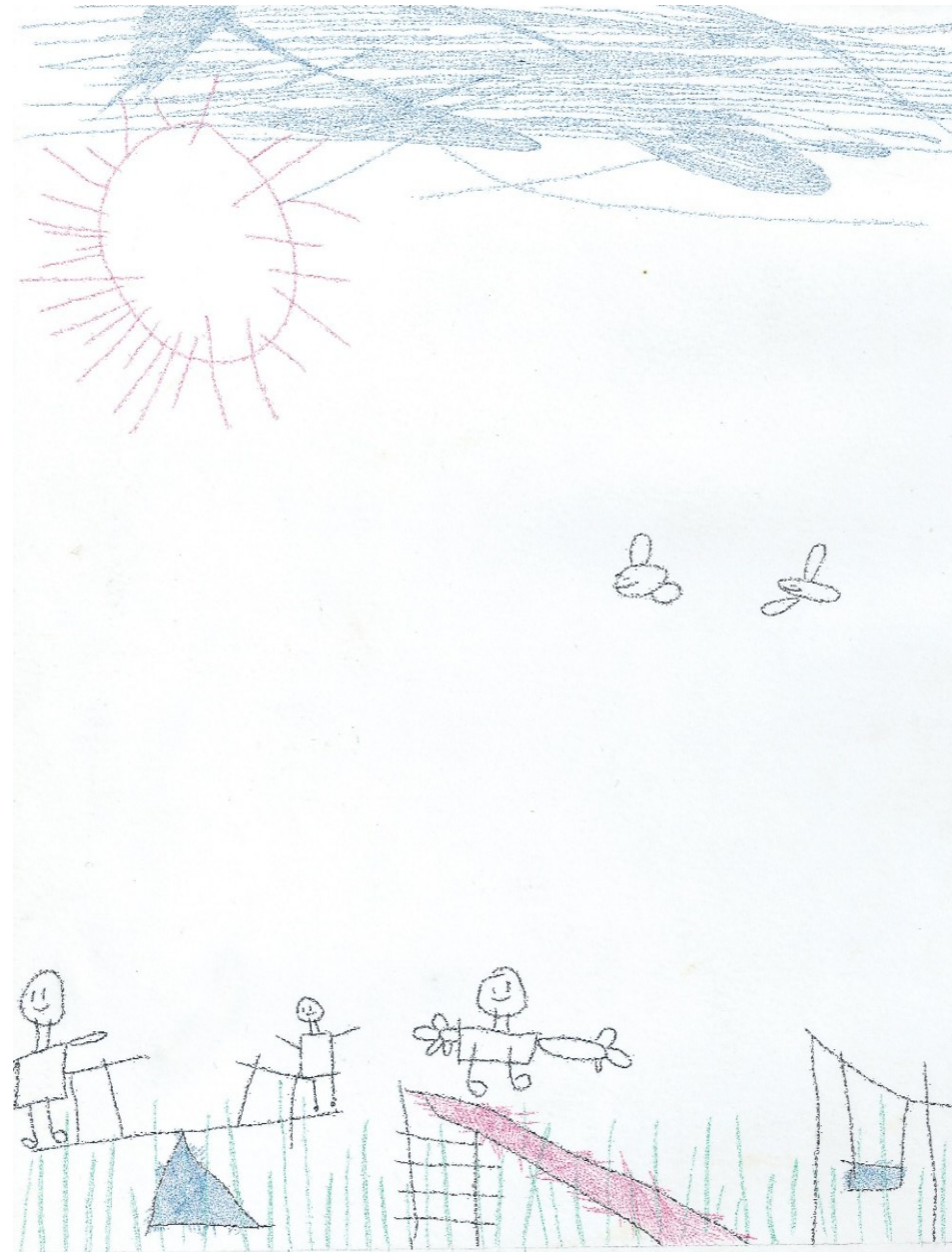
Maths | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12" x 9" (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



Bagh (garden) | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12" x 9" (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



Park and us | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12'' x 9'' (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



Mama and us | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12" x 9" (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



I spy | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 12'' x 9'' (30.48 x 22.86 cm)

Sana Zaidi



Mama | Repedo pen on archival paper | 2025 | 30'' x 20'' (76.2 x 50.8 cm)

SPECIAL THANKS

Aasim Akhtar

LAMA

WHITE WALL TEAM

Ejaz Saeed

Sajid Khan

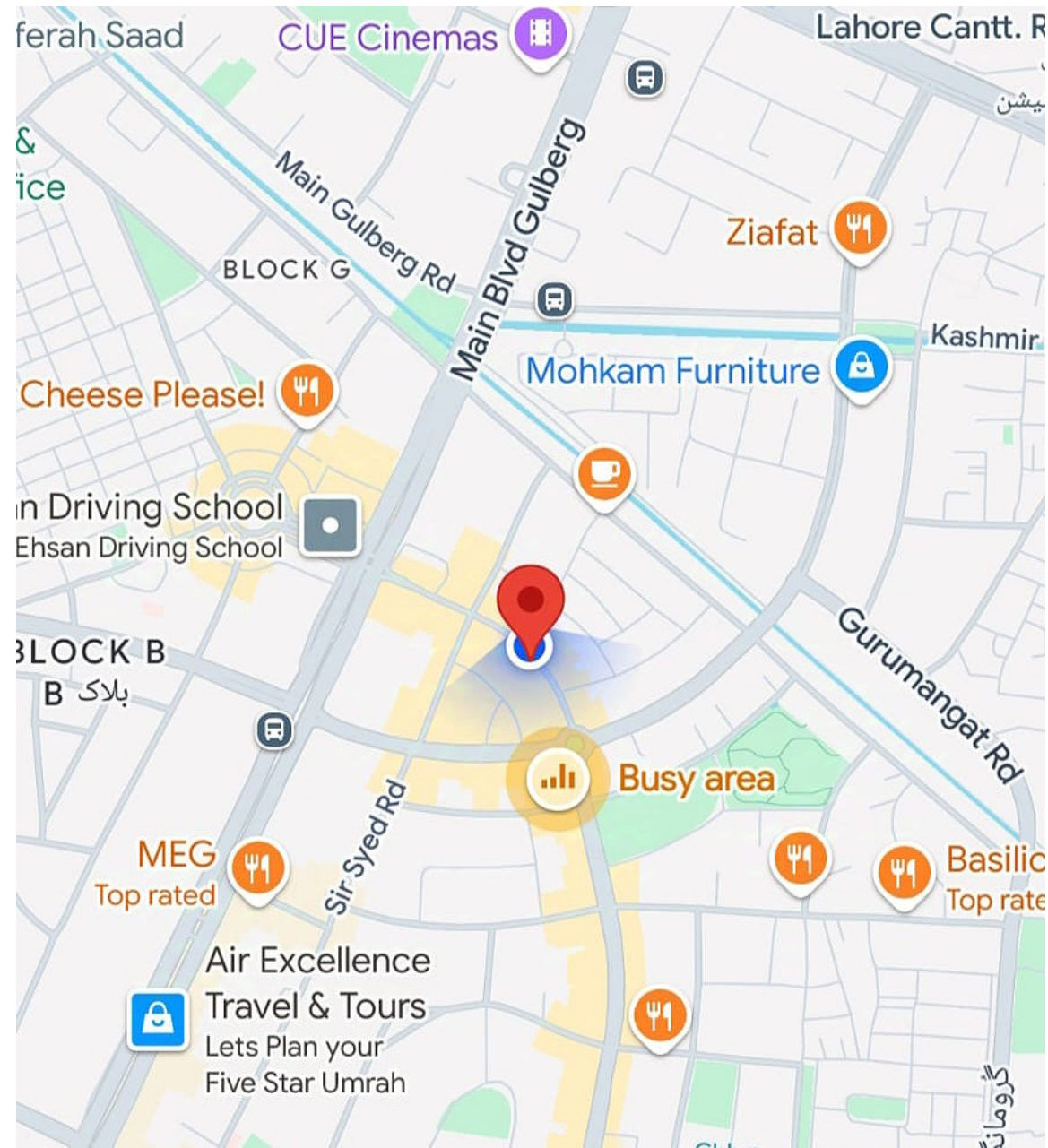
Hadia Zahra

Shehrbano

Awaiz Kamran

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Awaiz Kamran



123 P MM Alam Road, Gulberg 2, Lahore. | +92 328 8480242 | whitewallthegallery@gmail.com
www.whitewallthegallery.com | @whitewallthegallery

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