

WHITE WALL

GALLERY

Exposed

Suleman Faisal

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.

BIOGRAPHY – Suleman Faisal

Suleman Faisal, (born 1991) is a visual artist and educator currently based in Lahore, Pakistan. He works in various mediums such as sculptures, videos, and performances. Faisal graduated from The National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan in 2017 where he was awarded a Distinction for his efforts. Suleman's multidisciplinary artworks investigate the latent aggression present within humans and objects, and the minor acts of violence carried out through socially-acceptable activities such as cooking, hosting, or manufacturing. This interest in power balances and tools is influenced by Suleman's personal history, working in the toy-making and plastic industries, in addition to his exploration of the diverse socioeconomic conditions of the city in which he lives. His works have been featured in Lahore Biennale (2020) and Lahore Biennale (2018) and several exhibitions (2022) Echoes of the Silent Mind at Ejaz Art Gallery, Lahore, (2022) The Factory at Chawla Footwear and Chemical Industry, Lahore, (2021) The Smog Show at Zahoor-ul-Akhlaq Gallery, Lahore, (2021) For the Wicked and the Valiant at O Art Space, Lahore, (2020) Orange Sisyphus (Solo) at Canvas Art Gallery, Karachi, (2018) Microcosm II at AAN Museum, Karachi, (2017) Beneath the Surface at Canvas Art Gallery, Karachi. Suleman had the opportunity to be the Artist in Residence at Taaza Tareen 12 at Vasl Artist's Association, Karachi in 2020, and Pioneer Cement Factory, curated by Sameera Raja. In 2017, Suleman was awarded the Khurram Kasim Foundation Award to produce a solo exhibition at Canvas Gallery, in Spring 2021, also Rewarded a commission project "Homing in" by Platform Asia which was curated by Zena Khan and Chloe Hodge. His work is a part of many notable art collections in Pakistan.

Exposed

I am Suleman Faisal, a visual artist living and working in Lahore, Pakistan. In my practice, I explore the hierarchy of power dynamics within domestic spaces, examining how power gradually transforms into vulnerability and aggression morphs into guilt. My understanding of these themes emerged from resonant personal memories and lived experiences accrued by inhabiting a household filled with emotional chaos. Over the years, I gradually internalized the pressure to become stronger and learned to suppress emotions often associated with weakness and started avoiding conversations around vulnerability and treating it as a taboo subject. I carried shame silently and constantly questioned my own emotions and experiences. That silence, guilt, emotional restraint, and the pressure to perform masculinity continue to shape my artistic language today.

Through my work, I represent men not as heroic or monumental figures, but as simply human. In my pieces, their bodies often appear caught within private moments, gestures that simultaneously conceal and expose the self. Their poses draw attention toward emotional vulnerability rather than physical dominance. The figures to me do not feel idealized or triumphant; instead, they appear self-aware, slightly awkward, fragile, and emotionally accessible.

I am interested in this delicate space between vulnerability and performance; the tension between tenderness and aggression, shame and control, concealment and exposure. I aim to confront inherited ideas of masculinity and question what strength actually means when vulnerability itself is denied.

Suleman Faisal

Artist

Restraint

Suleman Faisal's visual artistry offers a compelling and nuanced critique of masculinity and power as they manifest and unfold within domestic spaces, particularly within the cultural context of Lahore and broader South Asian and Punjabi society. His oeuvre is not merely an exploration of personal history; rather, it is a profound interrogation of deeply entrenched social codes that govern gender, emotion, and authority in a region where patriarchal norms profoundly shape daily life. At the core of the artworks exhibited in his solo show *Exposed* lies an examination of control as a mutable force, one which fluctuates between dominance and vulnerability, and builds with aggression and guilt. This duality resonates strongly within the South Asian cultural framework, where masculinity is often rigidly associated with strength, stoicism, and emotional suppression. In many Punjabi households, expression of feelings, particularly those that might reveal weakness or tenderness, is frequently silenced or stigmatized, which, in contrast to the works displayed, subverts this falsely venerated silence, portraying men not as paragons of heroic masculinity but as stratified and manifold individuals grappling secretly in fear of exposing their inner frailty. These men inhabit private, intimate spaces, engaged in mundane acts laden with symbolic weight, suggesting that everyday life functions as a stage for ongoing negotiations of power and identity.

Faisal's figures represented as awkward, fragile, self-aware but disrupted from traditional heroic or valorized masculinities. Their postures vacillate between concealment and exposure, embodying the tension between societal constraints and implicit aspirations. The approach resonates as much with the cultural specificity of local domesticity as with universal themes of virile frailty. The depiction of intimate acts traditionally coded as feminine or domestic forms a subtle but striking critique of gender norms with the inclusion of sewing machines and thimbles as recurring motifs powerfully symbolizing the attempt to reign in and constrain femininity, while simultaneously exposing the toxicity embedded in patriarchal power structures.

These material and symbolic choices gain depth from Suleman's practice in toy-making and plastic manufacturing industries, emblematic of mass production, artificiality, and synthetic surfaces. This informs his deliberate use of materials that appear organic and lively yet reveal themselves as synthetic, mirroring the performative nature of masculinity as a constructed exterior masking of inner insecurities and contradictions. The tension between natural and artificial aligns with the artist's thematic concern with the facade of strength and the internal emotional landscapes that societal norms compel men to hide.

Moreover, the exploration of predator-prey dynamics through the imagery of the leopard and deer adds a layered metaphorical dimension to his critique which operates allegorically to convey the fluidity of masculine identity as both powerful aggressor and vulnerable victim, a duality seldom acknowledged in mainstream depictions, destabilizes the monolithic perception of male prowess and the reflection on the intertwined nature of dominance and fragility. His work also foregrounds the latent ferocity embedded in routine actions appended to labour, revealing how capitalism subtly permeates socially acceptable practices which integrate banality with undercurrents of control and micro-violence within the domestic sphere, particularly under patriarchal regimes.

The contemporary and unpretentious artistic language of Suleman confronts the systemic patriarchy pervasive in South Asian households, interrogating the objectification of the male body and the cultural and luxurious scripts of masculinity. Through poetic yet critical visual narratives, his work calls for a radical rethinking of strength, redefining it as the capacity to embrace vulnerability rather than suppress it.

Sousan Qadeer

06.2026

Exposed

Some artists respond to the world around them; others spend a lifetime examining the systems that have produced them. Suleman belongs to the latter. His work emerges from within a set of structures that shaped him, yet he persistently turns those structures over, shifting perspectives and exposing their contradictions. The questions that drive his inquiry have taken him through different spaces, molds, and modes of understanding.

Raised in a culture where patriarchal dominance is deeply embedded and social roles are defined with almost mechanical precision, Faisal became acutely aware of the expectations imposed upon him. His early works revolved around machinery and automation, exploring the subtle replacement of human agency by mechanical systems. Yet these works were never simply about machines. The machine served as an analogy, reflecting the repetitive behavioural patterns, responsibilities, and roles assigned to individuals within society. His first role as a police officer, ironically, was to reinforce these structures. The black-and-white certainty of written laws, combined with the unwritten codes passed down through culture, strengthened conventional ideas of masculinity and authority. His decision to leave his job and enrol in an art institution was therefore not merely a career change, it was an act of departure from a settlement – the cage of prescribed expectations.

Discarding a structure is one thing; freeing oneself from the habits, fears, and expectations that structure has implanted is another. Much of his work is a struggle that maps confronting inherited fears, behavioural habits, and social conditioning. The core of his practice stems from questions connected to power: Why do we perform prescribed roles? Why do we submit to imposed expectations? How does one negotiate with these conditions and conditionings?

One of the most fascinating works from his student years was a performance that revealed this internal struggle. In the performance, he positioned himself beside a column and invited passersby to slap him across the face. The gesture was both radical and unsettling. It evoked humiliation, submission, and vulnerability, recalling the endurance-based performances of Marina Abramović, where the body becomes a site for examining power relations between performer and audience. Watching strangers willingly participate was disturbing, yet painfully familiar within a society where authority is often endured without question. The work exposed both personal and collective patterns of submission.

This inquiry continued in his thesis project, in which he replaced the traditional bull used in a cold-press oil extraction system with a self-propelled machine moving autonomously within an open space. The machine behaved like a living organism, endlessly performing its task. Unlike Jean Tinguely's satirical machines, which critique automation and industrial overproduction through absurdity and self-destruction, Faisal's machine carried a different weight. It became a metaphor for the lives of men cursed to continue labouring without questioning the systems that demand their endurance. The analogy between the bull and the machine resonates with the artist's experiences and those of those raised within rigid social structures.

As the eldest of three brothers, Faisal learned responsibility at an early age. The burden of adulthood arrived long before adulthood itself. One series of the artist comprised mechanical toys cast not in the cheerful colours usually associated with childhood, but in black. These toys emitted a squeaking sound when compressed. Installed across the floor like a carpet, they resembled toys abandoned after play. Yet unlike familiar items, these demanded to be tread upon. Every step activated a sound that resembled a cry.

Faisal's current body of work renders his own body in miniature form. The works are fabricated through a combination of processes that bring together technological precision and human touch. Three-dimensional printing establishes the initial form, while the final stages of smoothing, refinement, and finishing are completed by the sculptor's hand. Faisal's mastery lies in the seamless integration of these methods, allowing digital and manual processes to operate as a single language.

The figures are engaged in gestures that are often deeply personal, yet they unfold within an open and public terrain. Here, distinctions between inside and outside, private and public, begin to dissolve. Caught in moments that seem to require no audience, they nevertheless exist under the suggestion of a constant gaze. Whether this presence is social, institutional, technological, or psychological remains deliberately ambiguous. The reduced scale draws the viewer into close observation, implicating them in the very systems of scrutiny that the work interrogates. In encountering the work, the viewer inevitably occupies that position, completing a circuit in which observation transforms intimate gestures into moments of exposure.

Throughout his career, Faisal has remained engaged with the same fundamental inquiry. How does one live within a system while simultaneously questioning it? His work does not offer definitive answers. Instead, it creates situations in which those questions can be felt, experienced, and confronted. In doing so, it transforms personal struggle into a broader reflection on the social structures that shape us all.

Nausheen Saeed

06.2026





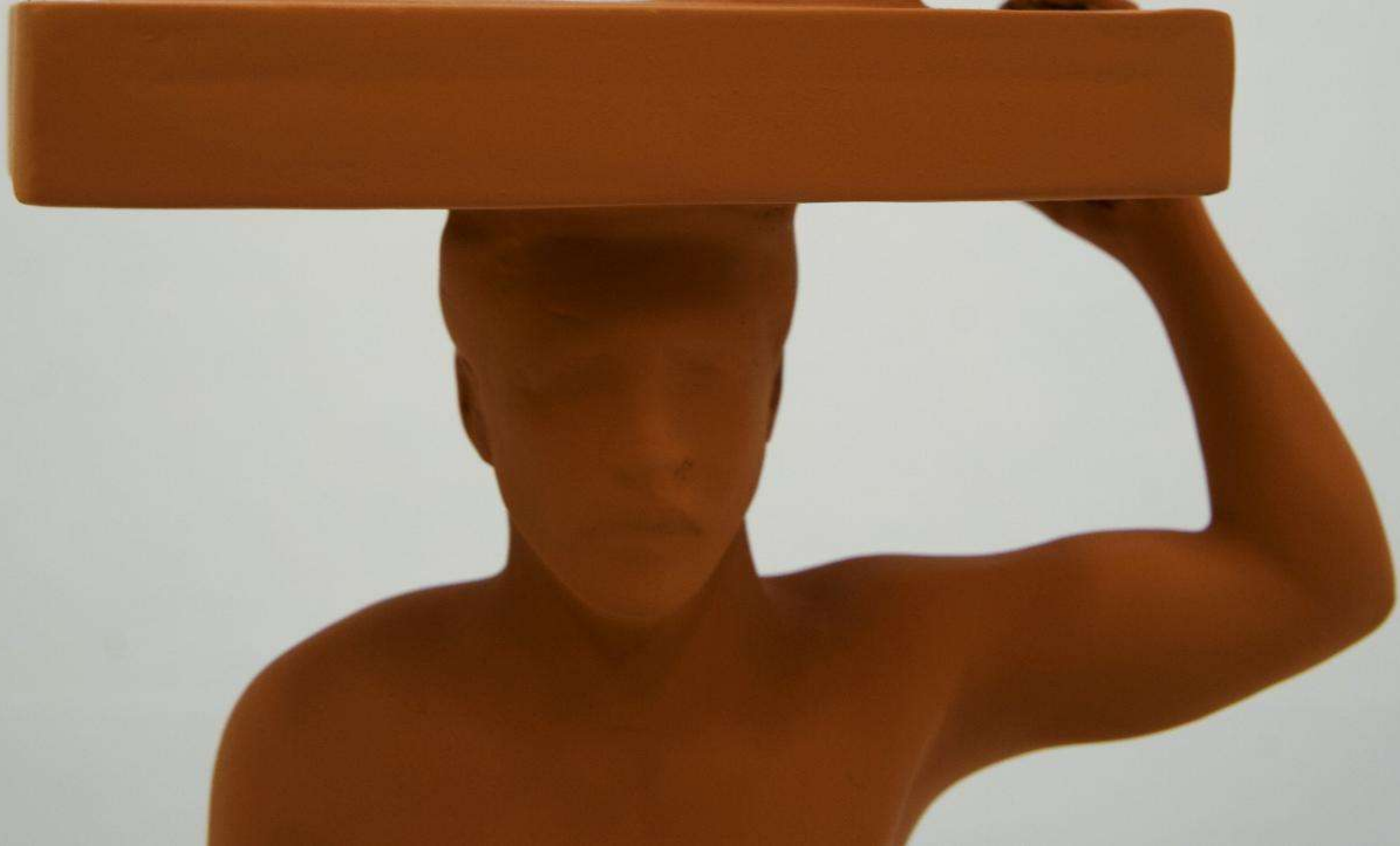
What Remains Unsaid | Resin and Metal | 22 x 8 x 7 inches | 2026





The Distance Between Rooms | Resin | 22 x 28 x 7 inches | 2026







No Place to Hide | Resin Metal and Stone | 31 x 11 x 26 inches | 2026





Instruction For Survival | Resin and Paper Mache | 22 x 18 x 19 inches | 2026





Learning to Disappear | Resin | 19 x 7 x 12 inches | 2026





Where Aggression Settles | Resin and Paper Mache | 28 x 15 x 20 inches | 2026





Between Shame and Control | Resin | 24 x 8 x 9 inches | 2026





What Remains Unsaid | Resin | 26 x 9 x 13 inches | 2026





Under Constant Observation | Resin and Metal | 53 x 8 x 8 inches | 2026





Softness as Evidence | Resin, Metal and Stone | 41 x 11 x 19 inches | 2026





The Architecture of Guilt | Resin, Metal and Wood | 60 x 18 x 11 inches | 2026





Growing up Quiet | Resin, Metal and Wood | 74 x 17 x 9 inches | 2026





Between Shame and Control | MDF Box & Video | Duration 13 sec | 13 x 13 x 48 inches | 2026



Between Shame and Control | MDF Box & Video | Duration 13 sec | 13 x 13 x 48 inches | 2026

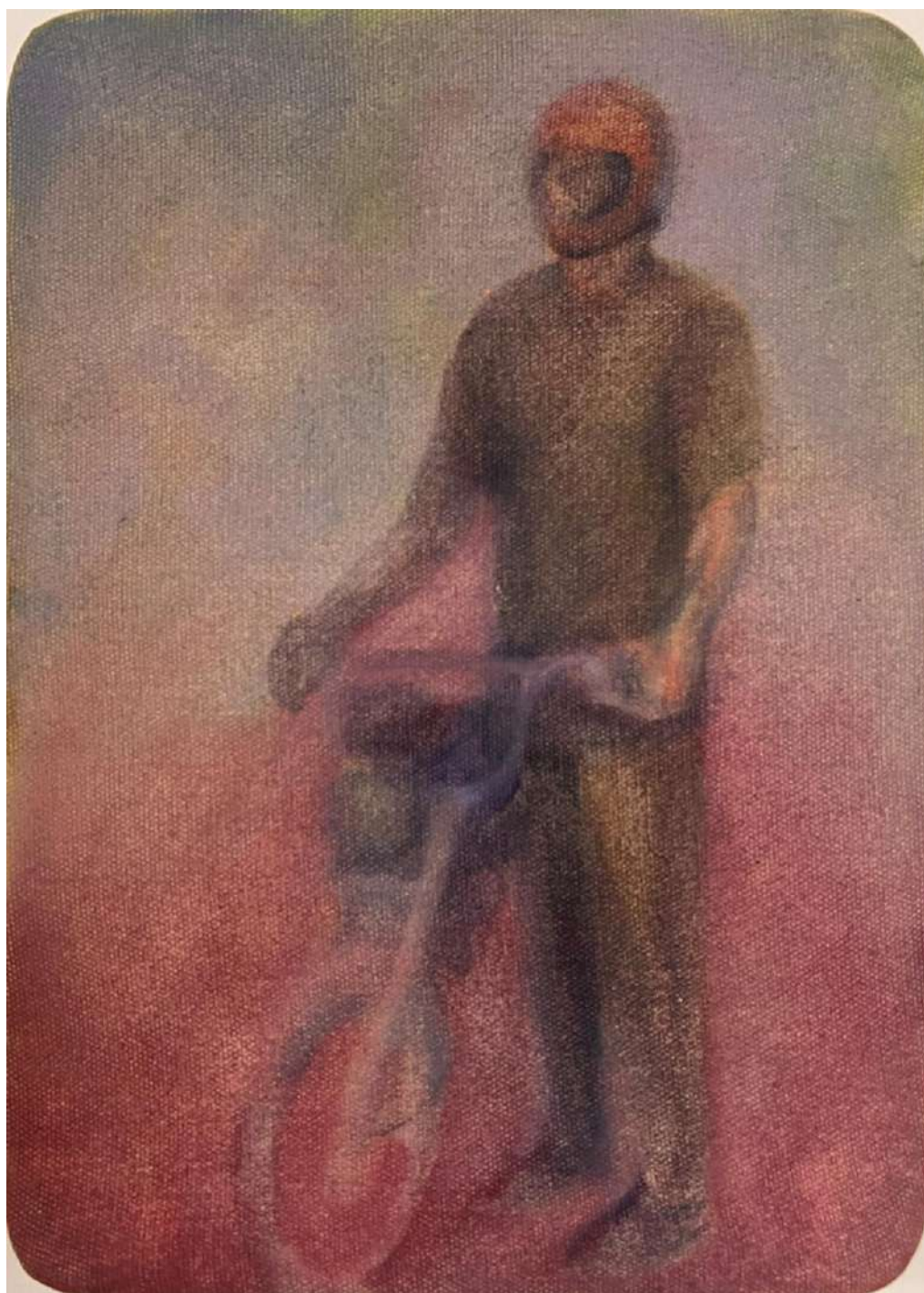


Permission to Feel | MDF Box & Video | Duration 48 sec | 6 x 20 x 12 inches | 2026

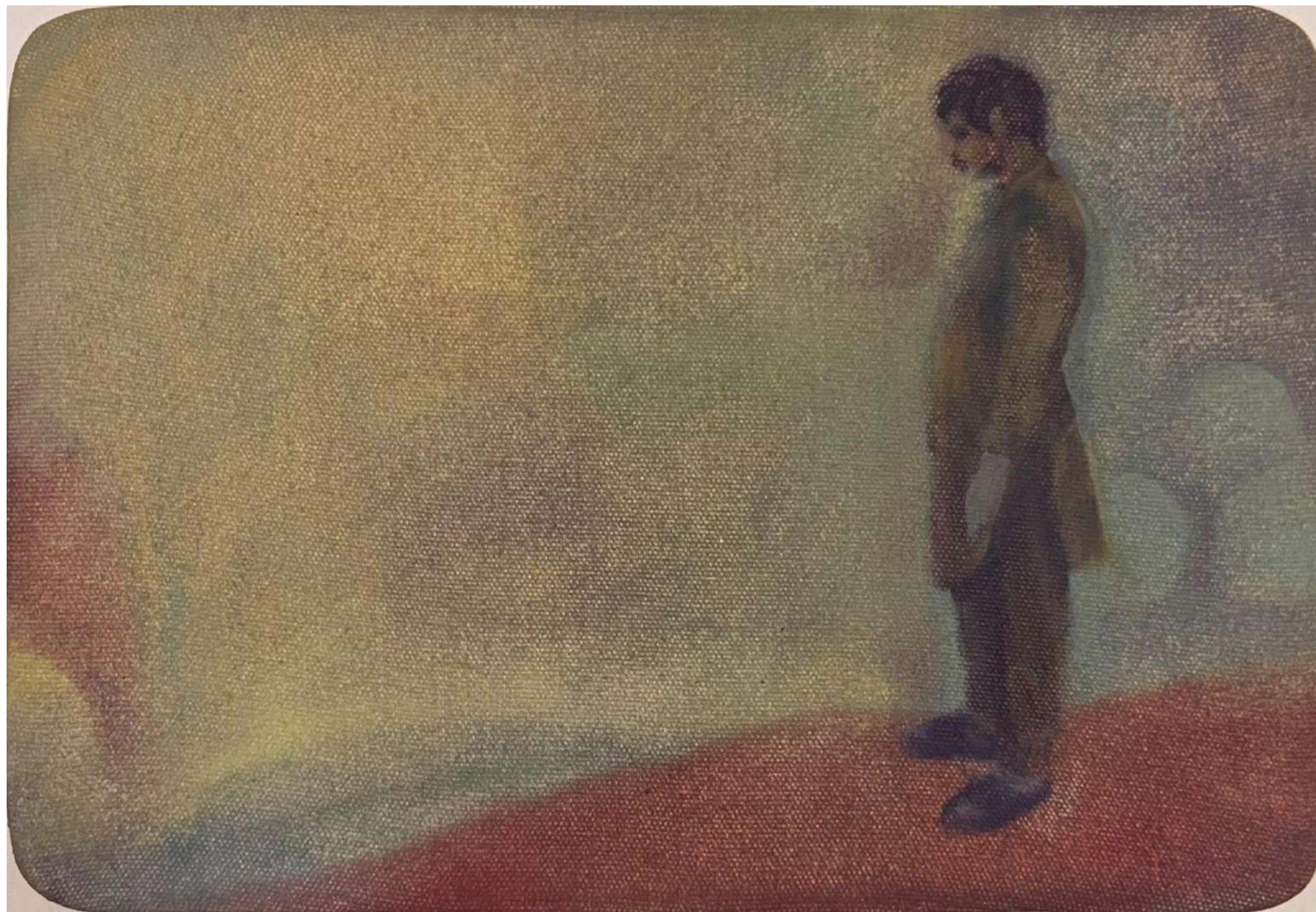




Permission to Feel | MDF Box & Video | Duration 48 sec | 6 x 20 x 12 inches | 2026



The Good Son | Oil on Canvas | 10 x 7 inches | 2026



The Weight on the Quite Things | Oil on Canvas | 7 x 10 inches | 2026

SPECIAL THANKS

Nausheen Saeed

Sousan Qadeer

LAMA

WHITE WALL TEAM

Ejaz Saeed

Sajid Khan

Hadia Zahra

Shehrbano

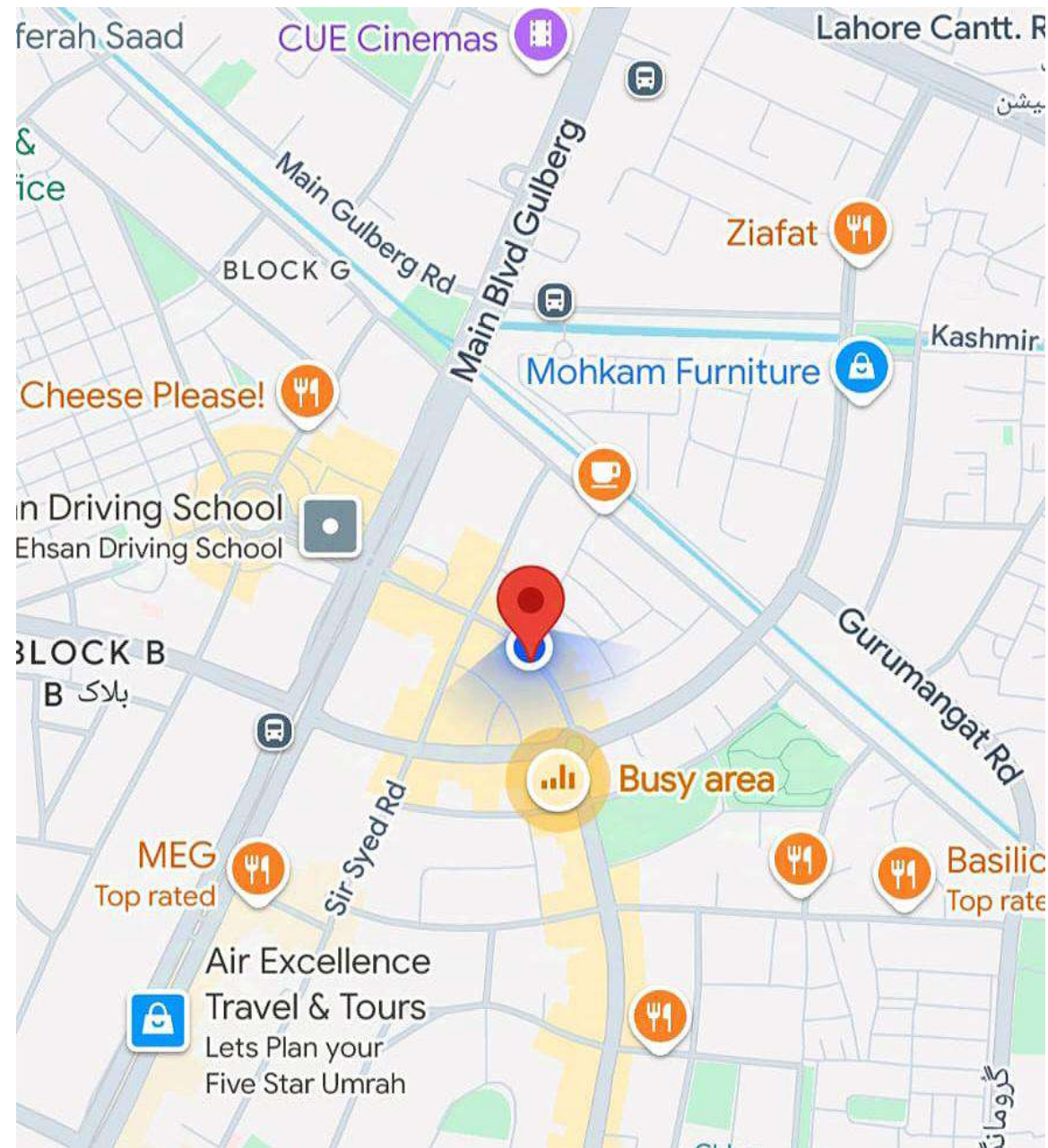
Umar Kamran

Qaswa Habib

Faiqa Syed

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Umar Kamran



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

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