

# Unstill Life

by  
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**Abstract**

This interdisciplinary project aims to reimagine the position of still life in the context of contemporary art. Derived from my memories and relationships with objects that represent my cultural background, this studio-based research traces my interest in visual perception. By intersecting analogue and digital media of art making, this project challenges the notion of stillness and expands on the idea of still life painting. Drawing from ideas of evocative objects, objecthood, stillness and expanded painting, this project opens dimensions of how still life is represented and experienced in contemporary diasporic art.

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## Introduction

This thesis project reimagines the meaning and the experience of still life in the context of contemporary art making, uncovering a multi-dimensional experience of art and painting in the form of an installation in physical space; the installation revisits still life subjects through interdisciplinary practice informed by both analog and digital modes of art making. Notions of evocative objects, objecthood, stillness, and expanded painting support the studio-based creative process.

My initial interest in still life developed while growing up in my parents' house in the city of Lahore, Pakistan. Various still life paintings, including the familiar compositions of fruits and vegetables, adorned the walls of my childhood home along with photographs, ceramic art pieces, backsplash tiles in the kitchen, and fruits recreated in Styrofoam hanging on vines around the kitchen counters. I explored the visual sensibilities of still life in my artworks during my undergraduate art training in painting at the National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan.

One of the key aspects of my practice at the time was to paint directly on various found and domestic objects. My first attempt in doing so was in 2014 (see fig.1). I always brought apples with me to school and with the limited materials (such as acrylic paints and canvas cloth) at my disposal, felt compelled to experiment and apply paint on the fruit and objects. This led to some unexpected and surprising results, which I have continued to explore ever since. I believe that this act of painting on the surface of already existing things and foods has allowed me to reflect on the symbolism of objects in my still life compositions, and their playful perceptual qualities.



Fig 1. Liaqat, Anam. *Untitled*, 12x12", Acrylic paint on real objects and canvas cloth, 2014.

In this thesis project, I extend my interest in painting and still life by focusing on objects which spark my memories of growing up in Lahore. I was brought up in a joint family house, which was home to the families of my father and his five brothers. Growing up as one of twenty-eight cousins and three siblings, I shared my childhood experiences of celebrating festivities, events, playing games and engaging in extracurricular activities in the afternoons together. We visited the famous 'Lucky Irani Circus' (originated in Lahore, Pakistan in 1969) which was put up yearly near our house. This event included festivities of the circus featuring breathtaking acrobatic performances, fairs, and markets where local toys and games were sold. By revisiting these shared experiences and memories of objects in painting, installation, and digital projection, while living in Canada now, I hope to generate unexpected encounters with still life for the viewer opening the possibility of reimagining the meaning of this familiar subject matter, while reflecting on my own identity as an artist living in diaspora in Canada.

The still life compositions in this thesis project comprise three groups of objects: ones that I sculpted by working from memory (Jewel Box), the objects sent to me from Pakistan by my family over the last couple of years (bird, ship, oil lamp), and the objects

which I collected during my recent visit to Lahore last year (fishing game, money bank, cart, Styrofoam fruits and vegetables). I catalogued the objects included in this project, and analyzed their origin, material properties, my personal memories of the objects, as well as their symbolic values associated with my relationship to them is also an important part of this project and my research in the Interdisciplinary Master's in Art, Media and Design at OCAD U.

My art making process engages not only the making and photographing of my still life compositions and installations after applying paint directly on the objects, but also digital animations projected and mapped onto the compositions and installations situated in the gallery space. This methodology is discussed in Section 3 of this paper. This translation from material practice to photography, animation, projection, and installation in physical space presents the potential to challenge the notions of objecthood and stillness in my work. By incorporating digital animations and projections, I aim to create a sense of movement and performativity that recreate my embodied experience and memory of playing with the objects both then and now. This aspect of my thesis research focuses on my interest in reconnecting with the material culture of objects.

In my research creation methodology, I move between studio work, reading art theory, and researching the work of women artists and feminist context for the histories of still life painting and media art. I see this cross-pollination of the processes of making, and their intersection with my memories, theoretical ideas, and art histories as an avenue to situate my identity as an immigrant woman artist living in diaspora.

There are four main questions that provided framework for my research and creation of art in the context of this MFA thesis project:

- *What are the ways of reimagining the experience of still-life painting in the context of interdisciplinary art making?*
- *How do notions of objecthood and stillness inform our experience of objects included in still-life compositions?*
- *How is my project informed by historical and contemporary artists who have explored the subject matter of still life and expanded painting?*
- *What forms of perception and affect emerge in the relationship between painted still-life compositions and their installation including projections in physical space?*

These questions are explored by investigating various interplays between physical and virtual representation of objects, by painting directly on top of objects and animating these compositions with digital projections. One of the overarching objectives of this thesis is to situate these processes as a means for uncovering the notion of Unstill Life, which I see as a vehicle for conveying unexpected forms of aesthetic perception and manifestations of painting that challenge the conventions of pictorial space and the relationship between painting and the viewer.

To provide a context on how I coined the title of my project, I consider the history of still life painting. The term still life originated from the Dutch word '*stilleven*', a genre of painting that came to prominence in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In French, still life was referred to as '*nature morte*' which was comprised in the arrangement of inanimate objects as



the subject matter of painting. Organic objects such as fruits, flowers and household items including glassware, metal, and textile were usually positioned on a table. A key principle of the still life painting was to capture anything that does not move or is dead. In the part of the world where I come from (Pakistan), still life is referred to as '*Jamad zindagi*' which literally means '*dead life*'. One of my concerns has been how painted physical objects become two-dimensional photographic images or time-based animations that challenge the notion of stillness (dead life) associated with still-life painting. Hence this trajectory and correlation from still to *unstill* informs the title of my project.

Concepts of expanded painting and painting-based installations are central to my interdisciplinary methodology. These are discussed in Section 2 of this paper following a brief literature review that addresses the meaning of *evocative* and *transitional* objects as embodiments of memory and identity. In addition, my research engages my investigation of women artists whose work and approaches to still life inform my understanding of this subject matter and my own art making.

Conducting research and making art in the midst the pandemic (COVID-19) is one of the main challenges of my thesis project. This research creation work during the time of COVID compelled me to situate and reflect on my studio practice in the contemporary art situation. The limits of personal face to face interaction and the shift of in-person experience of my painted installation to the virtual and digital environments made me not only think about the viewer's perception of my artwork, but also about my relationship to objects, memories, and my studio practice. In this paper which

accompanies my exhibition at the OCAD U's Graduate Studies Gallery, I aim to present a record of this extraordinary COVID journey and my engagement with interdisciplinary research and art creation.

## **Section 1: Objects, Contents, Choices**





In this section, I introduce, catalog, and discuss the objects which have been integral to my artwork and the conceptual premise of this thesis project. Further in this section, I discuss the origin of my relationship to these objects, and my childhood memories of playing with them.

In addition to specific childhood memories, one of the selection criteria for objects is based on their interactive aspects such as light, motion, and sound. Another key consideration is the emotional significance each object carried while growing up with my siblings and cousins in Pakistan.

I explored and worked with three groups of objects. The first group consists of objects which I sculpted by working from memory (Jewel box) as the original object could not be transported to Canada due to COVID induced travel restrictions in March, 2021. The second group of objects (bird, ship, oil lamp), I received from my family through my sister who came to visit me in Canada in July, 2021. I collected the third group of objects (fishing game, money bank, cart, Styrofoam fruits and vegetables) from various markets and bazaars during my recent visit to Pakistan in December, 2021. An appendix including brief descriptions of the markets in Lahore is presented at the end of this document.

I combined and worked with the objects from these three groups in my compositions. A set of photographic prints and images of the objects that I received and brought from Pakistan are also included in my exhibition.

Please see Table 1 below for more information about my objects.

| # | Object       | Image   | Year/Age      | Origin                   | Material Properties   | Function   |
|---|--------------|---|---------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Fishing Game |    | 1995/ 4 years | Imported from China      | Made of plastic, holds the multiple pieces together, speakers attached and powered by battery                                       | Used as game, replicated mechanism of the activity of fishing                                    |
| 2 | Jewel Box    |    | 2004/12 years | Imported from China      | Made from plastic in the shape of a china cabinet with a ballerina inside, inlaid with mirror, includes a small motor, and speakers | To store jewellery in the compartments of the box and for entertainment                          |
| 3 | Oil Lamp     |  | 2000/8 years  | Locally made in Pakistan | Made with red clay on a pottery wheel   | Filled with oil and a cotton wick, used a lamp for decoration at religious events and at shrines |
| 4 | Bird         |  | 1997/5 years  | Locally made in Pakistan | A plastic bird, covered with yellow fur, embedded with a motor key  | Used as a toy for kids as it moves when the key is rotated                                       |

|   |                  |   |                |                          |  |   |
|---|------------------|---|----------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| 5 | Styrofoam Fruits |    | 1991/ 1 year   | Imported from China      | Made of Styrofoam, rubber and plastic attached with handwoven stalks with cloth cut-out as leaf and spray painted on top   | Used for decoration purposes and to promote the sale of fruits, vegetables, and juice shops |
| 6 | Money Bank       |    | 2000/ 10 years | Locally made in Pakistan | Made with clay on a pottery wheel and hand painted with a slit on top  | Used for saving money as a piggybank  |
| 7 | Cart             |    | 1994/ 3 years  | Locally made in Pakistan | Made with wooden sticks, joined together with nails, rubber cut out tyres attached with a cardboard cut-out coated with granular paint on top and attached to a string | Used as a toy and for entrainment purposes by kids, when it moves a drumming sound is heard |
| 8 | Ship             |  | 2000/ 8 years  | Locally made in Pakistan | Made from a lightweight metal sheet, a wick and candle wax in a holder with two tubes at the back to be filled with water  | For entertainment purposes, propelled with the steam evaporation mechanism                  |

Table 1. Catalogue of Objects

In December 2021, I visited my family in Lahore, Pakistan. While I was there, I had an opportunity to spend some time at my childhood home (which has been vacant since the family moved to their current house fifteen years ago) and be reunited with the still life images in my mother's kitchen after all these years. This time, I looked more carefully at the spaces such as walls, cabinets, and racks with the objects, and was reminded that some of these were once found and sold at the fairs and markets. I thought that it would be important to try to *recollect* some of those objects and visit few markets (Bazaars) which have been also a part of my childhood and essential to my early visual vocabulary and identity. A short video footage of my visit to Lahore's markets is also included in my exhibition as well as some images along with a few 'new' objects that I came across.

## Objects, Memories, Relationships

Below are some of my reflections on the origin of objects that I used in this thesis project.

### *Styrofoam Fruits*

There is something about a mother's kitchen that remains embedded for life, and it was no different for me. It comforted me and I still sometimes experience a surreal sensation when I pick up a lightweight apple or pear, its gravity and quality taking me back to my adolescent years. The artificialness of *Styrofoam Fruits* ironically defies the decaying aspects of comestible objects which make it *unstill* for me. Specific artificial fruits appear accordingly with the changing season, to create an illusion. While some fall for the façade, others like me just refresh memories of summers long gone.

### *Fishing game*

Being a landlocked city, Lahore does not see fishing as a common activity, except for some commercial river fishing. In fact, the entire aspect of it is quite uncommon.

Nonetheless, the *Fishing Game* was found in many houses just like mine. The music matches its flow, the synchronous movements of the fish protruding up and down was so enrapturing that I would often lose to my sister, who was quicker at catching them. Perhaps I might have done better at the real activity, it being time-consuming and less captivating. I became interested in exploring the interactive and visual aspects of this game and its potential to evoke unstillness.

### *Money Bank (referred to as 'guluck' in Pakistan)*

I believe the concept of savings was introduced to me as a child through this object. It has a slit on top to insert money and funnily enough, the only way to empty it is to smash it on the floor. Quite a few variations of moneybox exist across the world, such as a metal box with lock and key, a piggy bank that can be emptied from below. The fascination of the *guluck* is that it was of such high value to me until I wanted what was inside. As soon as its purpose was complete, it was just a small pile of clay debris. I'm inclined towards this dual aspect in my work as well, such analogue and digital or still and unstill.

### *Jewel Box*

A jolt went through me as I first touched the plastic, the painting on it giving the feel of it being a decorative box made of metal. Then again, I was only twelve when my mother gave it to me. The *Jewel Box* was charming, playing lovely music as soon as it opened, a figurine in pearl white color rotating as if dancing. I always thought of her as my friend, the ballerina. There was a little oval mirror inside the box where I could see my reflection which I rarely did, more enthralled by the different knobs and closets the box contained. Not to forget the ballerina that greeted me every single time I opened it. In fact, I found out a week later that it was a jewellery box.



### *Oil Lamp*

I come from a country where many religious and cultural events are celebrated with unparalleled enthusiasm and fervor. Families would often get together which gave my cousins and I a chance to decorate the railings on the terraces with these *Oil Lamps* as soon as the sun set. The thick cotton wick created a larger flame (compared to a candle) which brightened up the dark night sky. Surrounded by these oil lamps, we all used to pray in silence with a belief that God can see us now and all our wishes will be fulfilled. I was interested in exploring the interplay between light and shadow origins in my early interactions with the oil lamp.

### *Bird*

This wind-up toy is often sold by street vendors near the traffic light signals. I was very young when my elder brother bought one for my amusement. However, I was only just admiring the bright yellow soft fur when he rotated the key and it started moving forward with a chirping sound. The performance was shortly followed by my outburst of tears. My parents laughed and tried explaining that it wasn't an actual bird, just a toy. Once I had grasped the concept, I enjoyed it thoroughly. The multiple emotions which were evoked from one object made me wonder how an inanimate object can bring out so many feelings.

### *Cart*

I vividly remember the loud pounding drum sound around the circus, fairs and street performers. I would close my eyes and follow the sound, giving in to the objective of its creation. Many carts are made of various materials, but this version of biodegradable materials such as wooden sticks is unique. A circular drum which is covered with a bright pink chalk paste, producing loud sounds that grabs attention even from a good distance. As I grew older, I ended up buying these with the intention of keeping the craft alive. It helped my conscience knowing the local handicraft markets weren't completely forgotten or overwhelmed by superior corporate chains.

### *Ship*

There was little to do outdoors during the monsoon season (July-September). The heavy rain restricted all our activities, except one. My cousins and I used to wait for the downpour to stop so that we could float our ships in the puddles created in our driveway. The fluttering from the tiny flaps resonated in our ears and hearts and the tiny ripples the ship created were like waves to us from a real boat. There is little of those days that I do not remember. The dullness of the monsoon season is forgotten amongst the spark of these reignited moments.

## Section 2: Theorizing Objects and Painting

In this section, I consider human relationships to objects. I also introduce some theoretical ideas that inform my understanding of working with objects within my studio methodology.

### 1. Object

Sherry Turkle's (2007) concept of evocative objects informs how my thesis regards objects as evocative, with the possibility of creating new connections and relationships between objects and people. In her book *Evocative Objects-Things*, Turkle states:

We find it familiar to consider objects as useful or aesthetic, as necessities or vain indulgences. We are on less familiar ground when we consider objects as companions to our emotional lives or as provocations to thought. The notion of evocative objects brings together these two less familiar ideas, underscoring the inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things. We think with the objects we love; we love the objects we think with. (5)

Turkle explains that every object we witness is ordinary until the perceiver charges it with their own emotional intensity and an object only becomes significant for an individual when a personal meaning is attached with it. I am interested in how "the inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things" can be materialized in my art making. Painting on objects allows me to get both physically and emotionally closer to my embedded associations with them. When these memory vessels are converted into painted objects, I start visualising them as components of my

compositions which results in stemming new ideas and creating multiple possibilities to channel my feelings with them.

Tony Gibart (2002) in his essay *Objecthood*, provides some insights on the potential meaning of objects. Gibart describes the conditions under which the object becomes an art object and how the picture plane holds an object in a painting. Gibart explains that the frame and surface of the picture plane determine the experience of its contents, and the objects and spaces depicted in painting, as well as the viewer's perception. However, in my artmaking process my approach towards the picture plane is opposite, as the viewer experiences the contents of painting in the physical space. The question which arises is how this approach affects viewer's perception of painting? Gibart asserts that "during the experience of art subject and object, space and time become collapsed, negating the possibility of objects" (1). By extending the object from the picture plane into a physical space along with the intervention of digital projection animations, I explore how the meaning of objects I use can be negated or reimagined.

The idea of the use of an object as being *transitional* originates with Donald W. Winnicott's theory of transitional object in his influential book, *Playing and Reality* (1958). Drawing and Winnicott's ideas, Margaret Gibson (2004) argues that *transitional objects*

...are not just mediating between 'I' and you', 'self' and 'other', 'here' and 'there', they materialize, whilst trying to 'fill in' the psychic experience of this gap or spacing. In other words, there is an existential dimension to the transitional objects in that they mediate nothingness. If the child negotiates the outside world

and the existential anxiety of absence partly through the transitional object, it is not surprising that the grieving might also negotiate their lost object with emotional props and buffers. (288)

Gibson discusses the significance of objects through phases of life and most importantly, transitional objects of childhood. Gibson also describes the potential of childhood objects which are related to one's existence to fill in the void of separation and attachment in making the transition from one phase of life to another easier. To ponder on the emotional quality of objects Gibson uses the psychoanalytic concept of cathexis as "a term for psychic charge or emotional stimulus attached to love objects and figures of identification" (287) to understand how we focus our mental energy a particular object. This association, according to Gibson, helps us to identify the characteristics of an individual. With the re-enactment of my childhood objects in my studio practice, I see my art making as a possibility to establish the emotional props and buffers that Gibson writes about, and that allow me to navigate the space between past and the present, my life in Lahore and Toronto, lost and found.

The concept of melancholy object is stated by Gibson as "the affective remainder or residual trace of sadness and longing in non-forgetting" (289). This further elevates my relationship with my childhood objects. Being an immigrant and living in diaspora by restoring my memories attached with these objects provided me an opportunity to revive those experiences. Previously I have been replicating objects from historical still life painting and steered towards composing still life with items that are meaningful to me, this drastic change occurred due to a '*grieving period*', when I moved away from my

homeland, Pakistan in 2019. The decision of working with transitional objects that are symbolic of my childhood and cultural background, created a comfort zone for me and helped me reminisce the times which I cherish the most: being surrounded with my parents, siblings and cousins while growing up. By holding on to these memories in the form of objects and situating them in my art making, in this thesis project, made it easier perhaps for me to call this new place, home.

The context of how an observer perceives the object is examined by James Elkins (1996). According to Elkins “seeing is metamorphosis, not mechanism” (12). This implies that seeing is not passive or simply the function of our eyes. Rather, seeing an object involves the memory of witnessing the unfolding of an event. For instance, when I visited the Christmas Market, Distillery District in Toronto, the hand-crafted toys, and figurines acted as mnemonic triggers and reminded me of the hand-crafted objects found at fairs in Pakistan. Elkins explains that during the process the observer becomes more aware of themselves, their surroundings and the information that is being generated in seeing an object. I see this notion of ‘unfolding of an event’ supported by my use of photography, video and digital projections with animations. Elkins demonstrates the presence of the object in relation to the observer as “the object not only looks back at the observer: it makes the observer by looking, and the other way around”. (75) This two-way active exchange of information and encounter between the observer and the material object that is something that I am concerned with in my work.

Celia Lury (2011) associates the origins of material culture with the idea of ‘possession rituals’ with the objects. Lury states:

Possession, in this view, is not a static state, but an activity. Through possession rituals, individuals create a personal world of goods that reflects their experience, concepts of self and the world. Such rituals help establish an individual's social identity. And it is in rituals such as these that the performative capacity of goods is made visible; through performance, objects express certain aspects of a person's identity. (15)

Lury's investigation of ritualistic potential of the objects implies that an individual is collecting the objects to reconstruct her/his sense of belonging and identity. As well as with this act of possessions, an individual also makes sense of themselves and their surroundings. I wonder, to what extent my process of working with the objects can be interpreted as ritualistic and if the objects in my work capture the essence of my relationship with them.

## **2. Reflections on Expanded Painting and Pictorial Space**

Expanded Painting shows the ghost, scent, smell, trace of painting, in short, the absence of painting as a kind of presence. Painting in its shift from wall to canvas to environment demonstrates a propensity to continually test and redefine its own boundaries. Painting withdraws from what seems most essential to it and in doing so it brings forward its hidden conventions making them articulate again. Expanded painting results in a certain self-consciousness about art, a refusal to take artistic boundaries as absolute, a questioning in relation to the being of the

artwork. Expanded Painting demonstrates a tension, within itself, a tendency to be both this and that, to be painting and not painting, to generate thinking about the conditions of its own being. (174)

One of the key theoretical concepts of my research is expanded painting which is discussed by Mark Titmarsh (2008). According to Titmarsh, expanded painting implies an intentional approach to exposing and questioning of the traditional boundaries and conventions of painting and its two-dimensional pictorial space. This process transforms the artist's thinking about what constitutes a painting as an artistic medium and ignites the new possibilities for reimagining the relationship between being and the experience of painting.

Furthermore, when expanded painting moves beyond the physical limitations of an image and begins to uncover spatial dimensions, multiple possibilities occur as there is no limit to what the outcome will be. Titmarsh associates this with "privation of withdrawal" as some elements are borrowed from painting and goes through a process of becoming but the end result is "beyond technological calculation, beyond objective representation, beyond the dynamic of power, beyond worldly presence, beyond use" (179).

Titmarsh's definition of expanded painting makes me more conscious of how the picture plane along with my thinking and art making process is transformed when I disseminate the elements of painting in a physical space. This also allows me to develop new relationships and reimagine the subject matter of still life.



Anne Ring Petersen (2015) discusses the trajectory of expansion of painting from its two-dimensional medium specificity to the form of installation that involves rethinking of painting's spatial concerns. This new orientation involves a myriad of changes in terms of the relationship between the painting, its viewer and the contexts in which art is displayed.

Today, much of the experimental energy is put into exploring the spatiality of painting, not as a product of illusionism, but as something physical and tangible. Artists are investigating painting's relations to objects, space, place, and the 'everyday', and in doing so they are expanding 'painting' physically as well as conceptually. In many cases one can hardly say that the artist is painting pictures; he or she is rather painting or creating spaces. This rethinking of space in painting, or painting as space, brings about changes in the relationship of painting to the viewer, the exhibition space, the art institutions, the market, and the other contexts of the artwork (126).

When painting transcends into space and re-emerges as a painted installation, Peterson states that it has a double appeal to the viewer as "it invites the viewer to experience and read it as a spatial environment, an installation with countless cross-references amongst its elements and a multiplicity of vistas that overturns traditional pictorial perspective. But at the same time it also urges the viewer to contemplate and read each painting as an individual image." (128) To decipher an installation painting as a single image, Peterson points out that the viewer must be aware of the elements of painting in relation to the space, objects, and their own presence, resulting in a

multipronged process. When a viewer is presented with multiple vantage points to enter a work of expanded painting, I am curious to know that what forms of visual perception will occur?

Petersen discusses the work of Jessica Stockholder, Katharina Grosse, Franz Ackermann, and Julian Opie as capable of generating immersive situations in which viewer can physically enter the picture plane. “By combining painting with installation and giving substance to the dream of physically entering a picture, artists like Stockholder, Grosse, Ackermann, and Opie produce an ambivalent intensity that distances their works from most installation art as well as easel painting” (134). Petersen’s analysis of these new forms of spatiality of painting has informed my thinking about the relationship between pictorial aspects of my work and its presence in physical space.

In my view, expanded painting provides a myriad of opportunities to establish a dialogue between the visual and material language of painting with space in which artwork is presented. However, I agree with Petersen that “...perhaps the most serious restriction that ‘the expanded field of painting’ still has to overcome is the rather fixed expectations of its audience. (137)”

### 3. Historical Reflections: Still Life, Women Artists & Feminist Perspectives

In this section, I would like to reflect on the contribution of historical and contemporary women artists, whose work and perseverance have deepened understanding of both the genre of still life and the concept of expanded painting.

Throughout the history of western art, it is evident that the genre of still life painting was common to many women. Nicole Myers in her article for Met Museum recounts about the painter Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres' (1780-1867) and his attitude towards women artists as; "he doubted the courage and perseverance of a woman in the field of painting... He would assign to them only the painting of flowers, of fruits, of still life's, portraits, and genre scenes". (1). Myers also points out that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century women were excluded from receiving free training at the state sponsored art schools and started working under the instruction of established artists and private studios.

In addition to facing many social pressure and patriarchal expectations, women artists were denied participation in life drawing classes which were an essential part of artistic training at the time. Women artists faced many social pressures as they were thought to divert them from their prescribed roles as wives and mothers which resulted in choosing between a career and marriage. Due to this limitation, women were inclined towards the subject matter that could be painted at home such as genre scenes, portraits and still life paintings. Due to these restrictions, the women artists gravitated towards the anti-academic movements such as Realism and Impressionism, emphasizing on everyday subjects over historical themes (Myers).

As a contemporary woman still life artist, I acknowledge the efforts of my women predecessors, such as Clara Peeters’ *“Still Life of Fish and Cat”* (after 1620s) (Fig.4) and Rachel Ruysch’s *“Roses, Convolvulus, Poppies, and Other Flowers in an Urn on a Stone Ledge”* (1680) (Fig.5). Their still life compositions and use of everyday objects, foods, and flowers, as well as their use of dramatic light effect, influenced greatly my early work. Similarly, I engaged these elements of still life by including comestible objects in my work titled ‘Unstill Life-1’ 2021. The appearance of cat in Peeters’ still life painting reminds me of my painted installation ‘Distilled Life’ (Fig.12) which is included in my exhibition. Peeters painted cat as frozen in action with pointed ears (Fig.4), and in my work, the cat enters my painted installation, and tracked its movement with a stop motion camera.



Fig 4. Peeters, Clara. *Still Life of a Fish and Cat*, after 1620. National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington. *National Museum of Women in the Arts*, <https://nmwa.org/art/collection/still-life-fish-and-cat/>.



Fig 5. Ruysch, Rachel. *Roses, Convolvulus, Poppies, and Other Flowers in an Urn on a Stone Ledge*, late 1680's. National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington. *National Museum of Women in the Arts*, <https://nmwa.org/art/collection/roses-convolvulus-poppies-and-other-flowers-urn-stone-ledge/>.

In the late 1960's, Feminists addressed the role of women in the western art world and in society at large. Linda Nochlin, a prominent feminist art historian asked in the renowned article 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists' published by ARTnews in 1971. Nochlin addressed this question by pointing out the reasons and provided a solution on how to overcome this situation by stating,

What is important is that women face up to the reality of their history and of their present situation, without making excuses or puffing mediocrity. Disadvantage may indeed be an excuse; it is not, however, an intellectual position. Rather, using as a vantage point their situation as underdogs in the realm of grandeur, and outsiders in that of ideology, women can reveal institutional and intellectual weaknesses in general, and, at the same time that they destroy false consciousness, take part in the creation of institutions in which clear thought—and true greatness—are challenges open to anyone, man or woman, courageous enough to take the necessary risk, the leap into the unknown. (1)

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the introduction of cinematic media, inclusion of photography, experimental film, conceptual art and installation, women artists were able to expand their approaches to still life. Sam Taylor Johnson's "*Still Life*" (2021) (Fig.6) exemplifies a conceptual and time-based take on still life. Johnson's composition consists of a still life setting of perishable items and to capture the transformation in the objects, she used time-based media without which it was impossible to capture time. Digital animations and projection are used in my work as a way of highlighting the

processes of visual transformation and perceptual playfulness that ultimately challenge the notion of stillness of my objects.



Fig.6 Johnson, Sam Taylor. *Still Life*. 2001. Courtesy Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. *Art Pulse*, <http://artpulsemagazine.com/breaking-the-medium-of-painting-down>.

Tacita Dean pushed the boundaries of viewing artworks which are conceptually charged and stepped in the contemporary art world. Dean's work explores the subject matter of still life in the contemporary art 'STILL LIFE' in 2018 at the National Gallery, London, United Kingdom. By displaying the historical works adjacent to moving images/videos (*Prisoner Pair*, 2008) (Fig.7) the exhibition enacts a mimesis of reality and contradicts the paradox of still life. Dean extends the pictorial space of a still painting by presenting a video alongside, making the painting unstill which assists in rediscovering new ways of making connection with the meanings attached to them. This interplay between a still image and a moving video reinvents the experience of a picture plane that emerge from witnessing these two mediums together. This work informs the digital and analogue juxtapositions in my still life compositions.



Fig.7 Dean, Tacita. *Prisoner Pair*. 2008. Frith Street Gallery, London. *The Art Newspaper*, <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2018/03/13/tacita-dean-on-her-three-major-london-shows>.

The subject matter of still life originating from painting was transformed into multiple and intersecting mediums of art including film, animation, video, photography sculpture and sound works. The interdisciplinary practice of artmaking is a key vehicle for exploration of still life within the framework of expanded painting. Some of the contemporary women artists who have been working with the notion of expanded painting which inform my research are Jessica Stockholder, Collete Laliberté and Kate Holcomb Hale.

Jessica Stockholder in the exhibition titled 'Martin Barré & Jessica Stockholder, Art 39 Basel' (2008) (see Fig.8), created some of the most intriguing object-based installations. Stockholder's work is a combination of ideas about how our bodies experience the materiality of things physically and in relation to the pictorial space. By breaking away from the conventions of a canvas, Stockholder reconstructs pictorial space by placing the found objects and materials such as wooden frame, plywood, plastic parts, hardware, wire, plastic tubing directly on the wall. By using these found materials and by applying acrylic and oil paint directly on the wall and the objects, Stockholder explores how the application of paint varies on different materials and the potential of colour to evoke emotions. Stockholder also questions the meaning of picture frame as a boundary by placing the objects in relation to each other to open smaller negative spaces.



Fig.8 Stockholder, Jessica. Untitled. 2008. Galerie Nathalie Obadia, France. Artist's Website, <https://jessicastockholder.info/projects/art/art-39-basel/>.

In her work, '*Folds in Space*' (2019) (see Fig.9), Colette Laliberté reconstructs pictorial space and composition through an installation of folded and refolded paper modules, arranged as assemblages of geometrical shapes directly on the wall. Laliberté paints on top of these folds, by using the different shades of grey and black that allude to the steel and cement to evoke the utopian architectural forms and high-rise buildings. The folds are attached to the wall and together they create a cluster of semi-geometric floating elements, their casted shadows on the wall support their dimensionality and presence in space. As Laliberté work is displayed as installation, this allows the viewer to experience this work in the spatial environment from different positions and angles.



Fig.9 Laliberté, Collete. *Folds in Space*. 2019. 12 Degrees, Toronto. Artist's Website, <http://www.colettelaliberte.com/projects/folds-in-space.html>.

Kate Holcomb Hale's work '*I'm not here for left leg. I'm here for right foot*' (see Fig.10) is a mixed media wall-based installation, made with paper, acrylic paint, and charcoal. Hale's work creates a dialogue about the transformation of pictorial space as the visitors were able to witness the developing movement in space during the eight



weeks of installation period. Hale paints on the wall as well as on the paper cut outs, which is floating and extended on the floor, inviting the viewer to experience their scale and presence in relation to space of the gallery.



Fig.10 Hale, Kate Holcomb. *I'm not here for left leg. I'm here for right foot.* 2019. Fort Point Gallery, Boston. *Artist Website*, <https://kateholcombhale.carbonmade.com/im-not-here-for-left-leg-im-here-for-right-foot>.

### **Section 3: Studio Methodology: Towards Unstill Life**

In this section I describe and discuss my studio methodology in relation to some works that are included in my thesis exhibition at the Graduate Gallery.

My studio methodology involves the following five steps of making:

- Painting directly on objects
- Organizing the objects within an installation
- Photographing the installation
- Rendering the photographs as digital animations by using software (Aftereffects, Premier Pro and Photoshop)
- Projection mapping on the installation

Building on painting directly on found objects which are made, sent, or collected during my visit to Pakistan. As discussed earlier, the objects included in my compositions are associated with memory of my childhood experiences. Once established these compositions are photographed and the captured images are further manipulated with video animations and digital projections, as well as the sound that they make (fishing game, bird). I create digital renderings on the software's such as Premier Pro and Aftereffects which were introduced to me by Professor Philippe Blanchard during the Independent Study elective course in Summer, 2021. These digital renderings are then mapped and projected onto three-dimensional compositions.

In my project, I am considering the elements within a painting (such as its silence or stillness) which are manipulated by incorporating movement in the inanimate objects

with digital projections that allows time to unfold within the representation and with the addition of sound which makes the compositions unstill. This process of working with and between physical, virtual, and time-based realities of objects and their projections onto three-dimensional compositions situated in physical space, opens the possibilities to reinvent the experience and the meaning of still life painting.

I relate my studio methodology with the concept of expanded painting as explained by Titmarsh and Peterson in the previous section. I extend the picture plane as I apply paint directly on the objects, the foreground, and background of the installation, hence incorporating the physical space. This create a tension between slickness (seamless illusion) and revealing that something is clearly an illusion.

In my work titled 'Unstill Life' (2020) (see Fig. 11), I approached each object of the composition as a canvas and applied the exact colour on top of every detail, the reference image was the object itself. The acrylic paints created a plastic layer around the organic object which preserved them, so with time the outer layer remained unaffected but the real object inside shrank and deformed. Applying oil paints on comestible objects was tricky as the oil tends to slip off the objects' skin. To counteract this, I applied thicker coats of oil paint, letting the initial layer of paint drying out first. Objects which were readymade (artificial fruits made of plastic), sculpted from plaster of Paris (bottles) and fibre glass (detailed pomegranate from inside), real objects which were preserved with raisin (slice of bread) were easier to apply paint on. The choice of paints (acrylic and oil) helped me to speed up or slow down the natural process of decomposition when exposed to the environment. In addition, I tried to capture the

change of form within the comestible objects with a camera by positioning it on a tripod and taking a picture of this composition twice a day (12am and 12pm) time over a period of one month. I then converted these sixty images in a time lapse video of twenty-seven seconds, played in a loop. I further arranged these images in an ascending order in Photoshop by creating a pattern which comes across as a pulsing motion from fall to rise as demonstrated in rendering the sunflowers. This sense of movement alludes to transition from the still to unstill life.



Fig.11 Liaqat, Anam. *Unstill Life*, 20 x 30", Oil on real objects and canvas cloth, 2020.

For 'Distilled Life' (2021) (see Fig. 12), I built an outdoor installation in my backyard. I filmed my composition with an action camera which took a photograph after every second in a day. The interaction of the birds, squirrel, and cat with this outdoor composition was recorded as a time lapse video of one minute and twenty seconds. By adding the elements of movement and life in the painted installation, I manipulated the still and silent forms of existing paintings. This supported my ideas about the process of questioning the preconceived notions of perception and seeing the artwork, as well as the reflection on historical forms of still life painting.



Fig.12 Liaquat, Anam. *Distilled Life*, 3 x 5 feet, Oil on real objects and canvas cloth, 2021.

Building on this foundation of my art making process, I explored an installation of my artwork titled 'Evocative Objects' in the Ada Slight Gallery (2021) (see Fig.13). I selected four objects; jewel box, ship, oil lamp and a bird to experiment with. I painted on top of each of these objects and placed a single object on a plinth. I used a digital projector to project the image of the objects on the top to recreate the function of the object. This was achieved in the postproduction in the software Premier Pro where placed the video of the moving object on top the still object from where the motion picks up. At this point, I also became interested in sound that was coming from the object and its potential to expand the visual experience of my work.





Fig. 13 Liaqat, Anam. *Evocative Objects*, 12 x 8", Acrylic paint on object and paper/canvas cloth, 2021.

Previously, I was cropping the installation focusing on the object which converted it to an image on a screen, whereas seeing the projection in gallery gave it a unique sense of scale, presence, and dimensionality. This also provided a possibility to walk around the work and see both objects and the projection from different angles. In addition, the spotlights from the ceiling casted shadows of the objects onto the wall and the projections enhancing the contour and shape of objects. This interplay of projected images, light and shadow with presence of the objects gave a certain metaphysical quality to my objects and made the perception of them more playful.

## Unstill Life

Unstill Life is the title of my thesis exhibition that includes:

- Projection of a time-lapse video *Unstill Life*,
- Painted installation with projection animation *Unstill Life-1*,
- Painted installation with projection animation *Unstill Life-2*,
- Projection of the footage from an action camera *Distilled Life*,
- Single object with projection animation *Series of Evocative Objects (oil lamp)*,
- Single object displayed with projection animation from the top *Series of Evocative Objects (ship)*,
- A short video footage of my visit to Lahore's markets with audio on a screen,
- Printed photographs of eight objects displayed on a shelf.

My interest in challenging the stillness of a still life painting is exemplified in the following compositions which is featured in my thesis exhibition below:



Fig 15. Liaqat, Anam. *Unstill Life-1*, Oil & acrylic paint on objects and wall(left) with projection(right), 2022.

'Unstill Life-1' (Fig.15) reflects on my experience of playing with toys and games such as bird, fishing game and jewel box. In this work, I activate the physical space around the installation by painting directly on the wall behind the objects, and on the platform(plinth) on which the objects are arranged. This idea of painting on the wall and the plinth is something I learned by looking at Jessica Stockholder's work.

The stillness in this work is challenged with the intervention of the projected animations as all three objects (fishing game, bird, jewel box) move simultaneously and the external dim light merges with the stark light of the projector. In this piece, my hand appears as part of the installation, and switches on the fishing game. What is unique about this work is that there is a projection of my arm and hand interacting with these objects. The music in the game can be heard and the movement of the fish is projected on the still object. My hand enters once again in the picture plane with the fishing rod and the game begins. This act of 'fishing' continues for ten seconds and is followed by a movement in the still bird across the wall, and its chirping sound. After it comes to a complete stop, a ballerina appears in the jewel box and starts rotating as the music plays. I hope the viewer feels invited to interpret the interactive and performative quality of this work.



## Section 4: Conclusion

Emerging from painting and by translating into a mix of installation, photography, video animation, digital projections, and sound, my MFA thesis research has allowed me the possibility to revisit and reimagine my interest in the subject matter of still life. Through this project, I revisited the childhood memories that reinforced my sense of artistic and cultural identity. As the objects in my compositions have a personal narrative attached to them, I explored their potential to evoke emotions and stimulate perception. I was able to reflect on how the use of animation and digital projections may inform the viewer's interpretation of my work in a contemporary context. This interest in establishing the relationship between my work and the viewer was a significant part of my journey of seeking unstill life.

Over last couple of years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic I worked primarily in my home studio. Situating my work in a gallery space gave me a completely new perspective on its presence and the function of pictorial space. When the concept of space collapsed during the pandemic and the in-person experience was diminished, I had to adapt and redefine my art making. This meant learning how to expand my painting practice by using digital media, animation, and projection. By investigating the processes of analog transformations of objects through painting and the digital renderings of my still-life paintings into compositions, I gained a greater awareness of interdisciplinary art making.

By adding the elements of movement and sound to painted installation, which is uncommon to traditional still life painting, this project provided me with a unique

opportunity to deepen and materialize my interest in memory. In this way, I was also able to generate both unexpected and playful perceptual experience of painting.

By situating the still life compositions as installations and moving beyond the confines of two-dimensional pictorial space, I learned some new ways of situating and re-interpreting the image making processes and visual perceptions. The process of transitioning of still life compositions from a canvas into a physical and immersive space of perception supported by time-based projections, is something to explore further in my art and research creation practice.

I explored the dimensions of a picture plane and spatiality of a painting with my interdisciplinary art making. This aspect transformed the relationship of the viewer with my painted installation in space and helped me in reimagining the experience of still life painting. With this project, I invite the viewer to re-evaluate their experience of viewing still life in the contemporary art, by using objects in a poetically affective manner and animating still compositions with movement and sound.

Through the consideration of historical and contemporary women artists, I have expanded my understanding of art in practice and exploration of the subject matter of still life. This approach informed my art making but also helped me identify as a woman artist living in diaspora. I encountered feminist theory as a part of my graduate studies journey for the first time, as these ideas were never discussed in such depths in Pakistan. These discoveries prompted self-reflection on how feminist theory impacts me and influences my art making and gave me a new perspective to appreciate the works by women artists.

As I explore material culture and work with products which are, on one hand, mass produced, imported from global supply chains and on the other, hand-crafted objects which are specific to the local markets and communities, I am curious to know what forms of perception will emerge when the viewer sees these objects with their own affiliations? What these objects and artworks may mean to people from different parts of the world? How their emotions and memories resonate with these objects and what feelings they stir up?

Executing this project in these uncertain times came with its limitations. I wanted to explore the context of viewer in greater depth and create interactive artworks where the viewer can feel as a participant in playing with objects (such as fishing game). With more in-person time and technical support I plan to explore the use of motion sensors to stimulate my installations when the viewer is standing at a specific viewpoint. I see these as directions for my explorations and ways to acknowledge the women and diasporic communities who are foundational to creative practices in this emerging hybrid space.

Displaying this project as an exhibition in the OCAD U Graduate Gallery space was a process of completion for me. This was the first time, I saw and experienced the multiplicity of modes in all my work in one physical space, the still in sculptures and photographs, overlaid with video and animation, revealing the potentialities and possibilities of *Unstill Life* and embodied memories. The layout of the exhibition played an important role in grounding this project. On entering the viewer is directed to eight photographs and invited to touch, hold, and read what is printed on the back of my

photographs: about my personal relationship with the objects which are placed in four installation and projection-based works. These photographs themselves being themselves *transitional objects* as they presented my lived experiences in the form of an image and a record of the lived moments of time. The simultaneous movement and overlapping sound coming from three installations suggest a potential for creating an immersive environment. This act provides an open-ended possibility for the viewer with which artwork to engage first. As the viewer comes closer to the installation their silhouette is casted on the composition, making them included in the work and spatial and perceptual field of Unstill Life. This act also helps to identify the real (still objects) and unreal (moving projections). As a reference from where these objects are found, the footage of markets is displayed on a screen. The two projections on the wall, opposite of each other (Fig 11 and Fig 12) dominates the gallery space. After witnessing the movement in man-made objects in the installation, the viewer comes across the movement in nature (decaying process and the movement of cat and birds). By displaying various forms of movement, creating vantage points of entrance in the installation made me conscious of how viewer might interpret, engage, and experience the subject of matter of still life in the contemporary art.

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## Images & Descriptions of Markets

### Naulakha Bazar

The objects which I found here hinted towards mass production and global trade. They were mostly used items which are imported as cartons (lots) and bought in bulk. The buyer is unaware of the objects and purchases them under the category of miscellaneous items. The display of these profusion of things included secondhand items such as domestic household items, display ceramic sculptures and figurines relating to Christmas and Easter, photo frames, vases, glassware, Victorian style crockery sets and plastic toys etc.



### Mochi Gate

This bazaar comprised of local objects made from plastic such as decorations for the festivals and weddings, toys such as dolls, carts, animal shaped masks which were sold in a plastic bag as a dozen. Games for children made from plastic which are imported from china such as fishing game, a ball with flickering light in it, spikes made from plastic molds, bow and arrow locally made from twigs and elastic to replicate the mechanism etc.



### Delhi Gate

Domestic household items such a tablecloth made of plastic to repel the stains and handkerchiefs to put chapatis on both printed with still life compositions. Locally made wooden spoons and hand-woven cane baskets and trays with threads of vibrant colours.



### Rang Mahal/Azam Market

Clothes for women with embellishments such as embroidery, beads, and mirrorwork. Bangles, artificial jewelry, leather shoes, decorations for weddings. There was a section which comprised of steel and metal cookware, hung, and stacked along the sides of the road. Historical crockery made of brass and precious metals which were hand beaten, carved, and retrieved from Historical Mughal era. They also polish these items upon request to give these rustic objects a new life.



### Shama Market, Ferozepur Road

Locally made pottery, vases, bird houses, money banks made of burned clay decorated with paint, mirrorwork, cutout work. There was intricately painted pottery used as kitchen sets for children. Sculptures of 2 -3 feet height such as lions, birds, hens made of clay for garden displays. Adjacent were the shops for Sheeshkari (mirrorwork) on walls which are custom made in walls of the houses for decoration purposes. I spotted a vendor on a bike who had crafted toys with paper and wooden reed sticks such as a fan, a drum rattle and a cart sold as toys for kids.



### Shah Alami Bazar

Sign boards made of LED lights which flicker on intervals, decoration pieces such a torch which created an illusion of fire with the wind blowing in the red cloth, the tap which is hovering at the top and letting a stream of water to flow - a gimmick that the water is coming from the air, candle shaped cylindrical flask with confetti

and a figurine inside. Fruits and vegetables made from Styrofoam, spray painted to resemble a real fruit or vegetables. Flowers made from cloth, and both these objects formation is deceiving hence becomes hard to tell the difference between real and artificial.





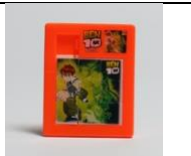







### Fruit Market/Old Lahore






This market opens at 4am with all the produce of fresh fruit from where the fruit vendors purchase in bulk. Stacks and piles of seasonal fruits such as oranges, pomegranate, pear, banana, and apple were found on the floor, shelves, and baskets.






## Appendix

| # | Object          | Image   | Origin                   | Material Properties   | Function  |
|---|-----------------|---|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Bowl            |    | Locally made in Pakistan | A ceramic bowl, glazed and stamped with a pattern   | Used as a serving bowl for street food  |
| 2 | Kitchen Set (a) |    | Locally made in Pakistan | Made with clay on a pottery wheel and hand painted  | Used as a toy by replicating a kitchen set  |
| 3 | Kitchen Set (b) |    | Locally made in Pakistan | Made with red clay on a pottery wheel and hand painted  | Used as a toy by replicating a kitchen set  |
| 4 | Bubble Game     |  | Imported from China      | Made from plastic, water enclosed in an acrylic sheet with plastic rings and ducks inside with 2 buttons attached | Used as toy, the button creates pressure with which the rings sit on the duck necks |
| 5 | Puzzle          |  | Imported from China      | Made of plastic enclosed with 9 squares which glide with the aid of grooves and a print on top                    | Used a puzzle game  |
| 6 | Ball            |  | Imported from China      | Made of rubber, enclosed is a transparent   | Used as a ball and as entertainment   |

|    |          |   |                          |  |  |
|----|----------|---|--------------------------|--|--|
|    |          |   |                          | substance in which is a plastic fish and a light   | purposes when the light omits on hitting the ground    |
| 7  | Dolls    |    | Locally made in Pakistan | Constructed with moulded plastic, pieces joined together with thread and draped with cloth | Used as toys by young girls                            |
| 8  | Mask (a) |    | Locally made in Pakistan | A moulded plastic sheet with a cut-out for eyes print of a clown face                      | Used for entertainment purposed when worn on the face  |
| 9  | Mask (b) |   | Locally made in Pakistan | A moulded plastic sheet with a cut-out for eyes with a print of a tiger face               | Used for entertainment purposed when worn on the face  |
| 10 | Plate    |  | Locally made in Pakistan | Made with cane and colourful straws weaved together  | Used as a household item as a tray or plate            |
| 11 | Fan      |  | Locally made in Pakistan | A wooden stick attached with a cardboard origami fan                                       | Used as toy and the fan rotates when moved swiftly     |
| 12 | Lantern  |  | Locally made in Pakistan | Metal moulded to make a structure and a glass cylinder inserted                            | Used as a lantern as an alternate to light/electricity |

|    |                |   |                          |  |  |
|----|----------------|---|--------------------------|--|--|
| 13 | Cloth          |    | Locally made in Pakistan | Cloth and screen printed   | Used as a household item/cloth   |
| 14 | Lucky Draw (a) |    | Locally made in Pakistan | Cardboard sheet with a plastic sheet on top and a powder placed on each row and column | Used as entertainment purposes, a version of a lucky draw or lotto ticket when the powder is scratched the prize is revealed |
| 15 | Lucky Draw (b) |   | Locally made in Pakistan | Cardboard sheet with a plastic sheet on top and a powder placed on each row and column | Used as entertainment purposes, a version of a lucky draw or lotto ticket when the powder is scratched the prize is revealed |
| 16 | Table Cover    |  | Locally made in Pakistan | A print on plastic sheet   | Used as a household item, placed as a tablecloth to repel stains   |
| 17 | Peppers        |  | Imported from China      | The shape made from Styrofoam with plastic cut out leaves on a                         | Used for decoration purposes and to promote the sale   |



|    |          |   |                     |   |   |
|----|----------|---|---------------------|---|---|
|    |          |   |                     | handwoven stalk, spray painted on top   | of fruits, vegetables, and juice shops  |
| 18 | Chillies |    | Imported from China | The shape is made from Styrofoam with plastic cut out leaves on a handwoven stalk, spray painted on top                       | Used for decoration purposes and to promote the sale of fruits, vegetables, and juice shops |
| 19 | Onions   |    | Imported from China | The shape is made from Styrofoam with cloth cut out leaves on a handwoven stalk, covered with a plastic spray-painted sheet   | Used for decoration purposes and to promote the sale of fruits, vegetables, and juice shops |
| 20 | Garlic   |  | Imported from China | The shape is made from Styrofoam with plastic cut out leaves on a handwoven stalk, covered with a plastic spray-painted sheet | Used for decoration purposes and to promote the sale of fruits, vegetables, and juice shops |

|    |   |  |                           |  |   |
|----|---|--|---------------------------|--|---|
| 21 | Grapes<br>(purple)  |   | Imported<br>from<br>China | Moulds made of<br>rubber joined<br>together in a<br>bunch, with a<br>cloth cut-out for<br>leaf and spray<br>painted on top | Used for<br>decoration<br>purposes and to<br>promote the sale<br>of fruits,<br>vegetables, and<br>juice shops |
| 22 | Grapes<br>(yellow)  |   | Imported<br>from<br>China | Moulds made of<br>rubber joined<br>together in a<br>bunch, with a<br>cloth cut-out for<br>leaf and spray<br>painted on top | Used for<br>decoration<br>purposes and to<br>promote the sale<br>of fruits,<br>vegetables, and<br>juice shops |
| 23 | Banana,<br>Apple,<br>pomegranate,<br>peach,<br>orange,<br>mango |  | Imported<br>from<br>China | Made from<br>Styrofoam and<br>plastic(orange),<br>spray-painted on<br>top  | Used for<br>decoration<br>purposes and to<br>promote the sale<br>of fruits,<br>vegetables, and<br>juice shops |

Table 2 The collection of objects from the Markets/ Bazaars



| # | Object         | Image  | Year/Age       | Origin                   | Material Properties   | Function   | Relationship   |
|---|----------------|--|----------------|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| 1 | Snake          |   | 2002/ 10 years | Hand crafted in Pakistan | Made with wooden sticks, joined with nails, and a paper snake head is attached on one end | Used as a toy, extends to resemble the movement of a snake | I used these snakes to play pranks with friends and cousins at carnivals               |
| 2 | Fountain Light |  | 2002/10 years  | Locally made in Pakistan | A bunch of fish wire is attached to a plastic base with lights, powered by a battery      | Used as a lamp which emits multicoloured light             | Placed on my nightstand, the changing lights intrigued me and helped me to fall asleep |

Table 3 Objects used in the exhibition in the Ada Slaight Gallery “Evocative Objects”

## Visual Documentation of the Exhibition

Anam Liaquat, *Unstill Life*, April 18-22, 2022, Graduate Studies Gallery, OCAD University.



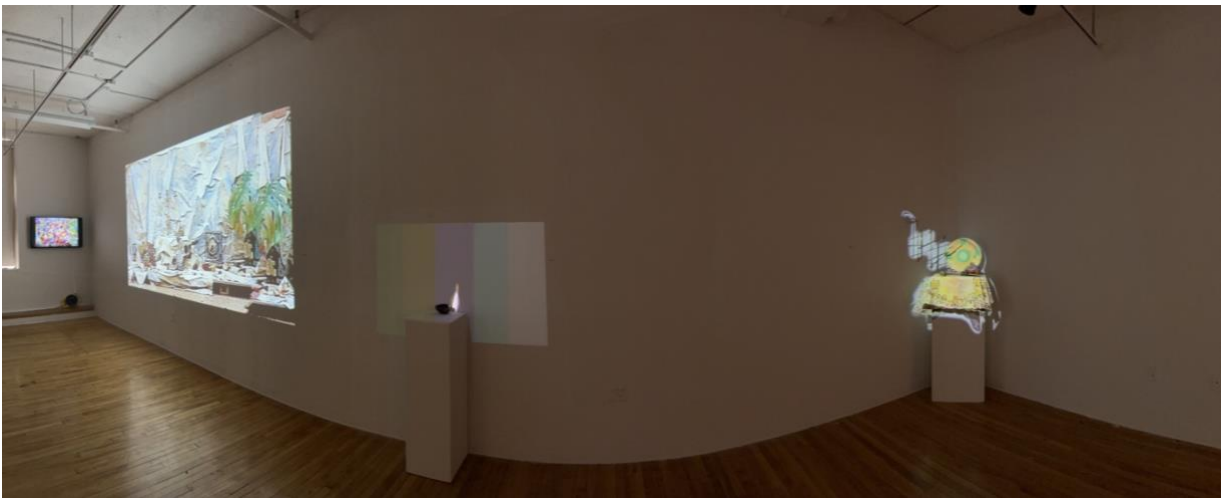
Exhibition view/layout



Exhibition view/layout



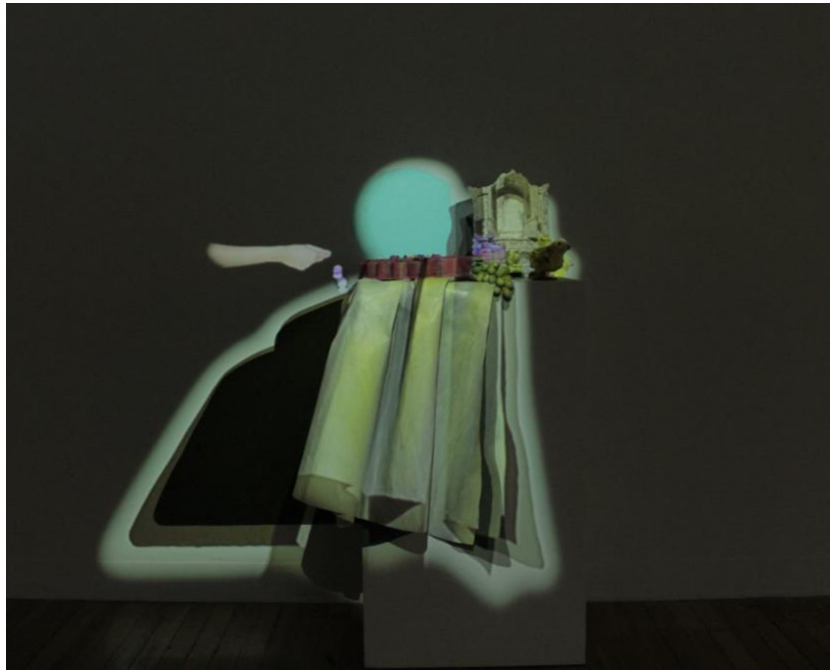
Exhibition view/layout



Exhibition view/layout



Exhibition view/layout

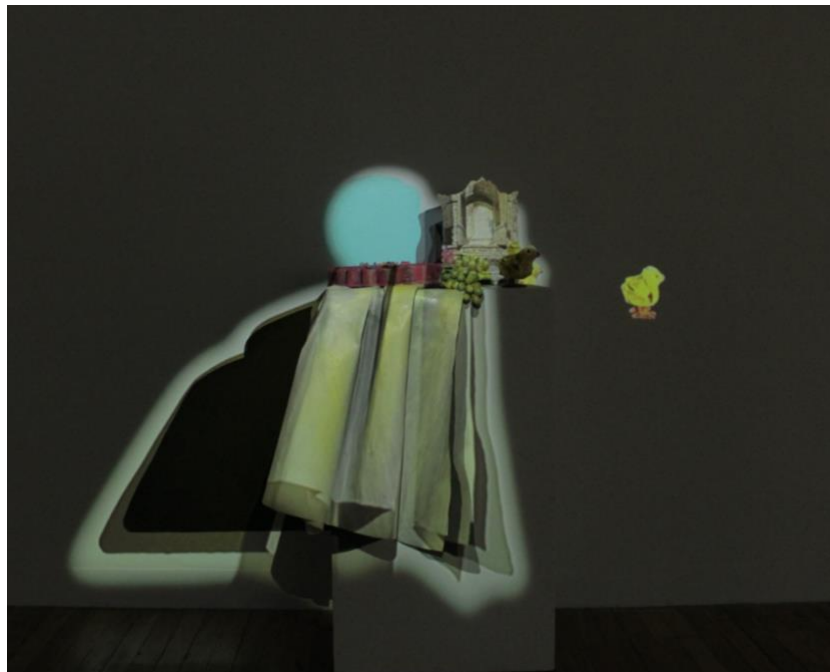


Unstill Life-1

2022

Paints on objects and canvas cloth with digital animation and projection  
63" x 45"

<https://youtu.be/SG327-vRqVA>



Unstill Life-1

2022

Paints on objects and canvas cloth with digital animation and projection  
63" x 45"

<https://youtu.be/SG327-vRqVA>



Unstill Life-2  
2022

Paints on objects and canvas cloth with digital animation and projection  
73" x 64"

<https://youtu.be/ueke7Y8DpgA>



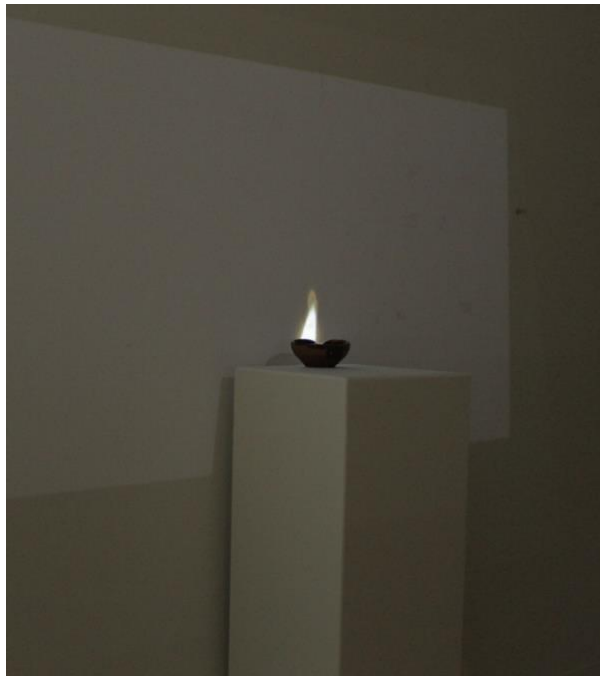
Unstill Life-2  
2022

Paints on objects and canvas cloth with digital animation and projection  
73" x 64"

<https://youtu.be/ueke7Y8DpgA>



Series of Evocative Objects (ship)  
2022  
Paint on real object with video projection  
18.5" x 18.5"  
[https://youtu.be/q\\_Lwf9ScoyE](https://youtu.be/q_Lwf9ScoyE)

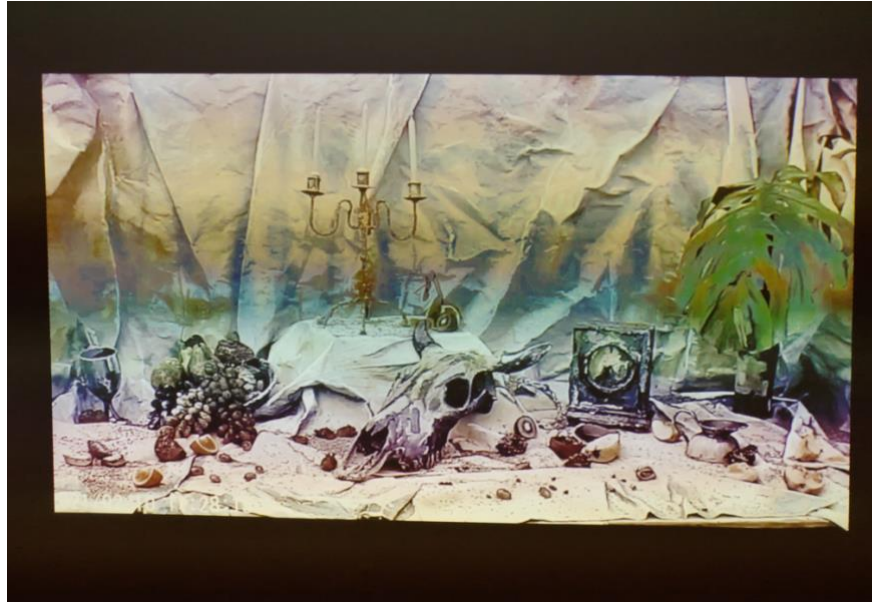


Series of Evocative Objects (oil lamp)  
2022  
Paint on real object with video projection  
8" x 8"  
[https://youtu.be/UM4WK7PK\\_3k](https://youtu.be/UM4WK7PK_3k)





Unstill Life  
2020/2022  
Oil on real objects and canvas cloth (projection of a video)  
3' x 4'  
<https://youtu.be/TX03TNcodLg>



Distilled Life  
2021/2022  
Oil on real objects and canvas cloth (projection of a timelapse video)  
6' x 4'  
<https://youtu.be/W7SNOHBoihM>