



# Semblance of Perfection

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Thesis 2020





It's a walk down the memory lane. I tried to capture the semblance of pain in perfectionism, which over the years became part of myself.

The fibre artwork shows pursuit of perfectionism that lead us to hide our imperfections and it's a journey towards self actualization where I reveal those imperfections hidden within myself.

Intended to ease the battle as I struggled for years. In hope to regain what was lost in time.

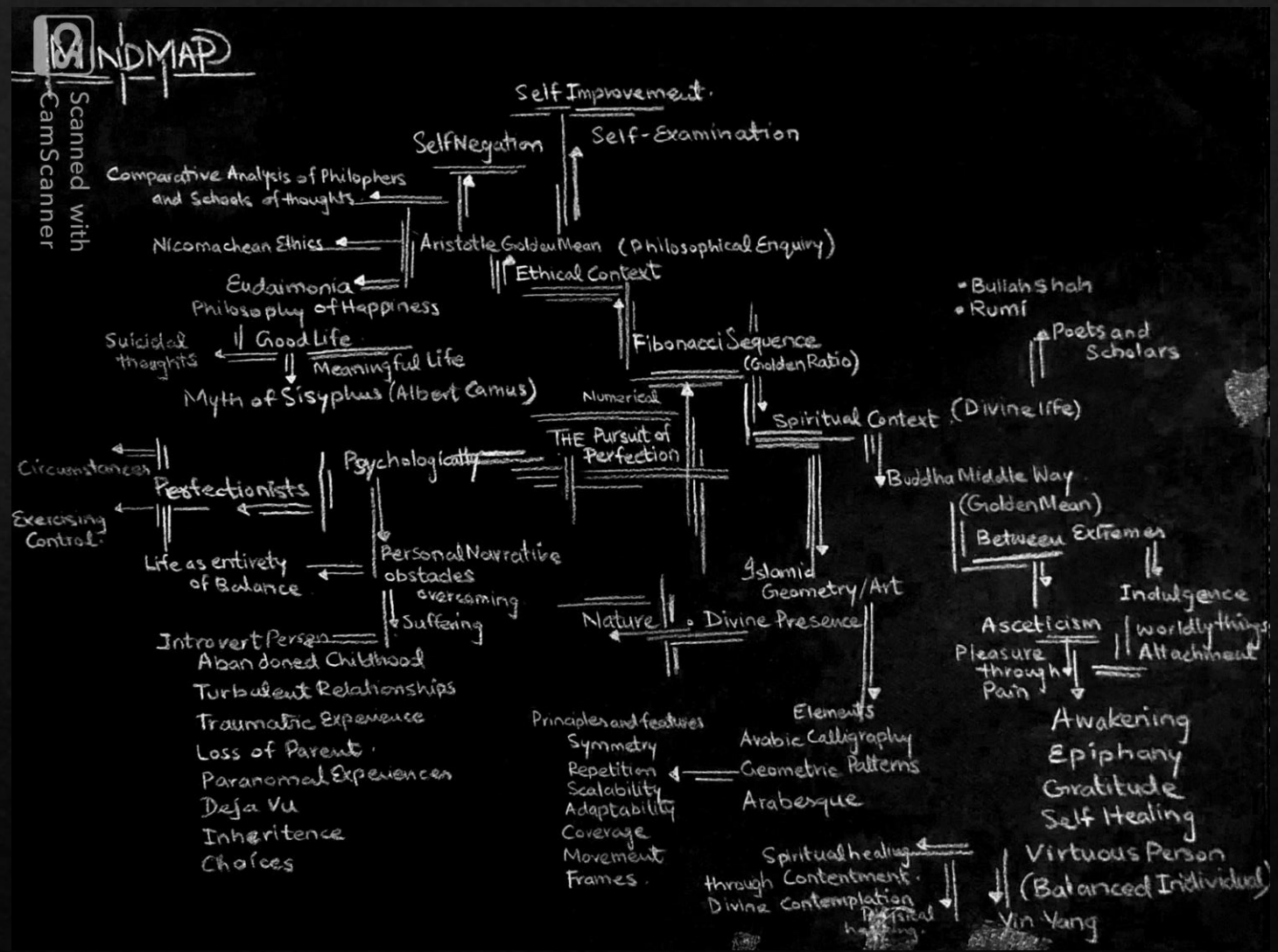


## Literature Review

Concept development (research gap)

I started my mind map from the topic of Fibonacci sequence (golden ratio) and golden mean. Proportion used by Architects in ancient Greece. Principle that is deeply embedded in nature. Ratio 1:1.618. I studied golden mean in numerical, ethical and spiritual context.

During this journey I tried to understand how the world perceives perfectionism and how Aristotle's eudaimonia could be that ultimate path to achieve the state of contentment.





I started doing comparative analysis of different philosophers to understand the purpose of life and make it more meaningful in quest to achieve happiness and started to collect visuals with my own photography.

Visited the Shrine of Bullah shah who talks about ecstasy and his poetry tries to depict the reality of life and how faith and gratitude helps us move towards a path which shall be the ultimate goal of human existence.





Documented and observed patterns, grids, and apply golden mean.

Secondary research

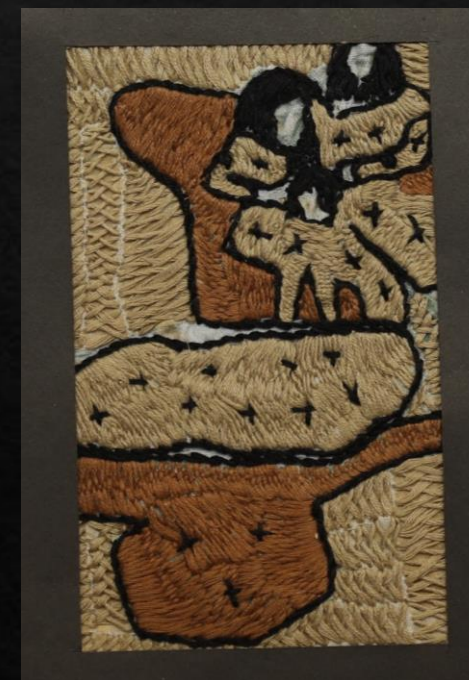
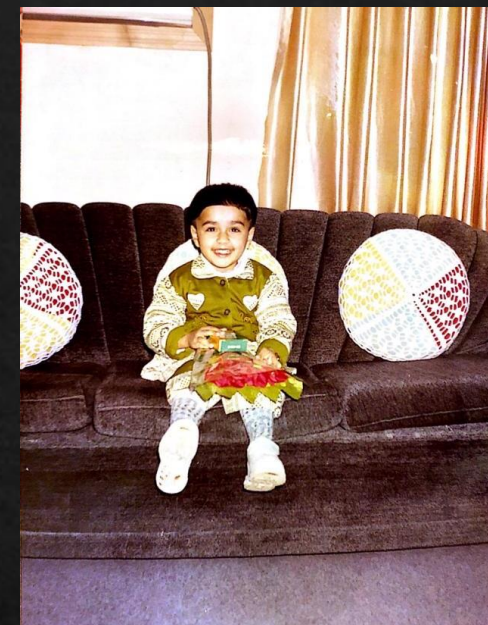
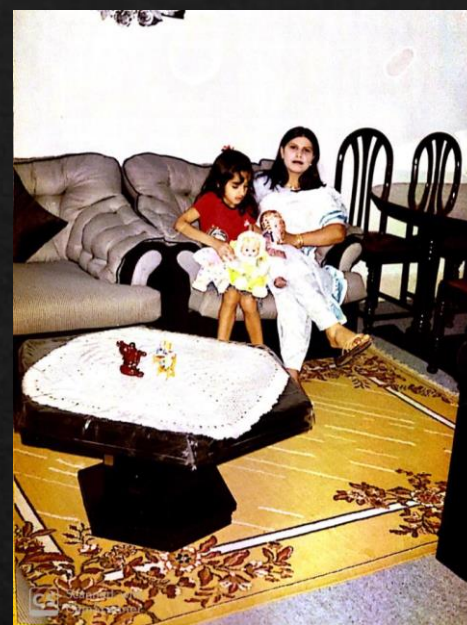
- J-store Articles
- YouTube Crash course philosophy
- Ted talks

Primary Research

Wrote down narrative and documented struggles in a text form.

Then I started collecting visuals and the only available source was the archived photographs and few furniture pieces and textile pieces.

I also visited my Ancestral home/room to collect visuals, which was an experience for my own inner soul.





Read Articles, Books , watched documentaries and movies for reference

- Lawrence, I(2017),Ending the pursuit of perfection. (Ted talk)
- Sadler. M(2019).What is Self Negation? And how it is practiced in daily life? (article)
- Meakins, W(2014),Nietzsche, Carlyle and Perfectionism. Journal of Nietzsche Studies,Vol.45,No 3(pp.258-278).Penn State University Press.
- Steffan.P.R.(2014).Perfectionism and Life Aspirations in Intrinsically and Extrinsically Religious Individuals. Journal of Religion and health ,Vol.53, No,4(pp.945-958).Springer.
- Qweis.F.S(2002).Islamic Art as an Educational tool about the teachings of Islam. Art education, Vol 55,No .2,One World(pp18-24) National Art Education Association.

### Movie reference

ROOM tells the extraordinary story of Jack, a spirited 5-year-old who is looked after by his loving and devoted mother. Like any good mother, who dedicates herself to keeping Jack happy and safe, nurturing him with warmth and love and doing typical things like playing games and telling stories. Their life, however, is anything but typical—they are trapped—confined to a 10-by-10-foot space that Mother has euphemistically named Room. Mother has created a whole universe for Jack within Room, and she will stop at nothing to ensure that, even in this treacherous environment, Jack is able to live a complete and fulfilling life. But as Jack's curiosity about their situation grows, and Mother's resilience reaches its breaking point, they enact a risky plan to escape, ultimately bringing them face-to-face with real world.

Held captive for 7 years in an enclosed space, a woman and her young son finally gain their freedom, allowing the boy to experience the outside world for the first time.



Related to my personal narrative of 12 years of my life spent in a room and my associations to it, and how my mother wanted to protect me from the outside world. How it psychologically effected me as a person.



## Aisha Khalid

Born 1972, Lahore, Pakistan

Aisha Khalid earned her BFA from the National College of Arts. Her works fuse the disciplines of geometric patterning and botanical studies into ambiguous correlations, subjects. The subject matter and political nature of her work is influenced by her own personal experiences around gender, aesthetics, the role of women, and power relationships between the East and West. As a Pakistani woman who grew up in a modest household, domesticity is treated with both critique and fondness. Khalid is part of a movement of artists in Pakistan that works in the traditional medium of miniature painting. However, she juxtaposes these decorative surfaces with deeply controversial social and political messages. Her work explores issues around cultural expectations, stereotyping, multiple oppressions of women, and the global aftermath of 9/11.



"Pattern plays its part in Khalid's use of camouflage by hinting at the hypocrisy within an orthodox use of repetition, one legitimized by a popular concept of tradition which refuses historical change."  
V. Whiles, art writer



In her textile works, she draws on a form of visual language rooted in Persian culture, with its emphasis on pattern, colour and geometry, as well as incorporating designs from traditional Charbagh gardens. These large-scale hanging tapestries, embedded with thousands of long, gold-plated pins, employ Khalid's foundational skills and show the confident hand of a miniaturist, together with her sensitive understanding of pattern making and her love of textiles. The sharp pins pierce through several layers of cloth and add a three-dimensional, sculptural element to the works, creating a tension between beauty and danger, pain and fragility.

## Nazgol Ansarinia

Nazgol Ansarinia is a multimedia artist whose work examines the systems and networks that underpin her daily life such as everyday objects, routines, events and experiences, and the relationship they form to a larger social context. Characterized by an emphasis on research her work engages with subjects as diverse as automated telephone systems, American security policy, memories associated with a family house, and the patterns of Persian carpets. Ansarinia often seeks to reveal the 'inner workings of a social system' by taking its components apart and putting them together again, to uncover assumptions, connections and underlying rules of engagement.



### Rhyme & reason, 2009

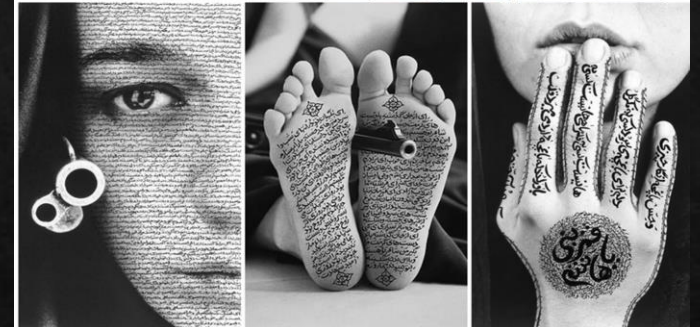
Nazgol Ansarinia's art is a huge hand woven carpet installed on a raised platform. From a distance what appears like a rug with a traditional palette and timeless pattern at close quarters reveals a narrative built from everyday activities of Iranian people. Elderly women are gathered in concentric circles to emulate a dense central floral motif. Rows of people are poised on arabesque spirals. It's almost a game that the visitor gets immersed into as he/she tries to identify the people that populate Nazgol's carpet. These configurations elevate the familiar Persian Carpet into an intriguing canvas inhabited by people going about their chores. In this work titled Rhyme and Reason the artist attempts to show 'how competing factors, scenarios and events can co-exist within a single framework.'

Ansarinia transformed otherwise traditional Persian motifs to integrate new life in Iran. As Ansarinia's curator Leyla Fakhr stated: "Mostly perceived as a precious commodity, the Persian Carpet has been the most utilized object for Iranians throughout history. While we have become numb to the repetition of floral shapes, Ansarinia prompts us to have a closer look at what is being taken for granted."



## Shireen Nishat

Shirin Neshat is a contemporary Iranian visual artist best known for her work in photography, video, and film (such as her 1999 film Rapture), which explore the relationship between women and the religious and cultural value systems of Islam. While her early photographs were overtly political, her film narratives tend to be more abstract, focusing around themes of gender, identity, and society. Her Women of Allah series, created in the mid-1990s, introduced themes of the discrepancies of public and private identities in both Iranian and Western cultures.



"It's really about the question of people versus tyranny," she says. "And people who fight power versus people who hold power." Neshat wants to leverage her current considerable power in the art world to bring more voices from Iran and the Arab world into the global cultural conversation.

This is indicative of how I feel about women in Iran. In the way that they are so far against the wall, but they are far more resilient and protesting and they're much more of a fighter than the men because they have much more at stake." Offers a rare glimpse into the evolution of Neshat's artistic journey as she explores topics of exile, displacement, and identity with beauty, dynamic formal invention, and poetic grace. Beginning with her early photograph series, Women of Allah, the exhibition also features iconic video works such as Rapture, Turbulent, and Passage, monumental photography installations including The Book of Kings and The Home of My Eyes, and Land of Dreams.

Throughout her career, Neshat has constructed poetic worlds in which women and men navigate narratives that mirror interior and political realities. Inside of and against these metaphorical worlds, Neshat studies the specifics of both individual and cultural gestures and poses, often assembling and interviewing real people who have lived through some of the most turbulent events of recent history, including the Green Movement in Iran and the Arab Spring in Egypt.



Artists who works around domestic, power relationship within family, personal experiences, gender roles, memories and examines system, networks and daily life relationships to social context. Their works have social and political message and focus on cultural expectation issues.

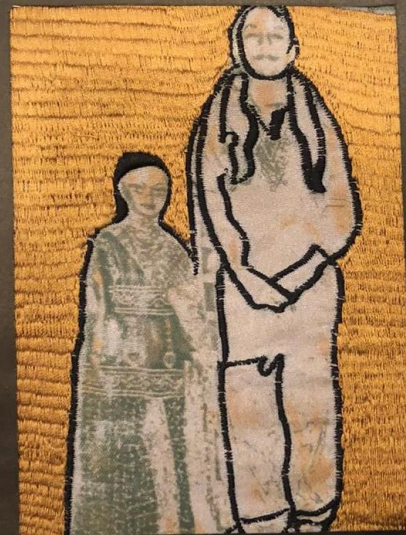


Collected childhood photographs and recomposed them into postcard size compositions with hand sketching, doodling and photoshopped to give them a personal perspective.

These post cards or linear drawings begin to divulge many hidden stories and I viewed these initial sketches beyond their soul intention.





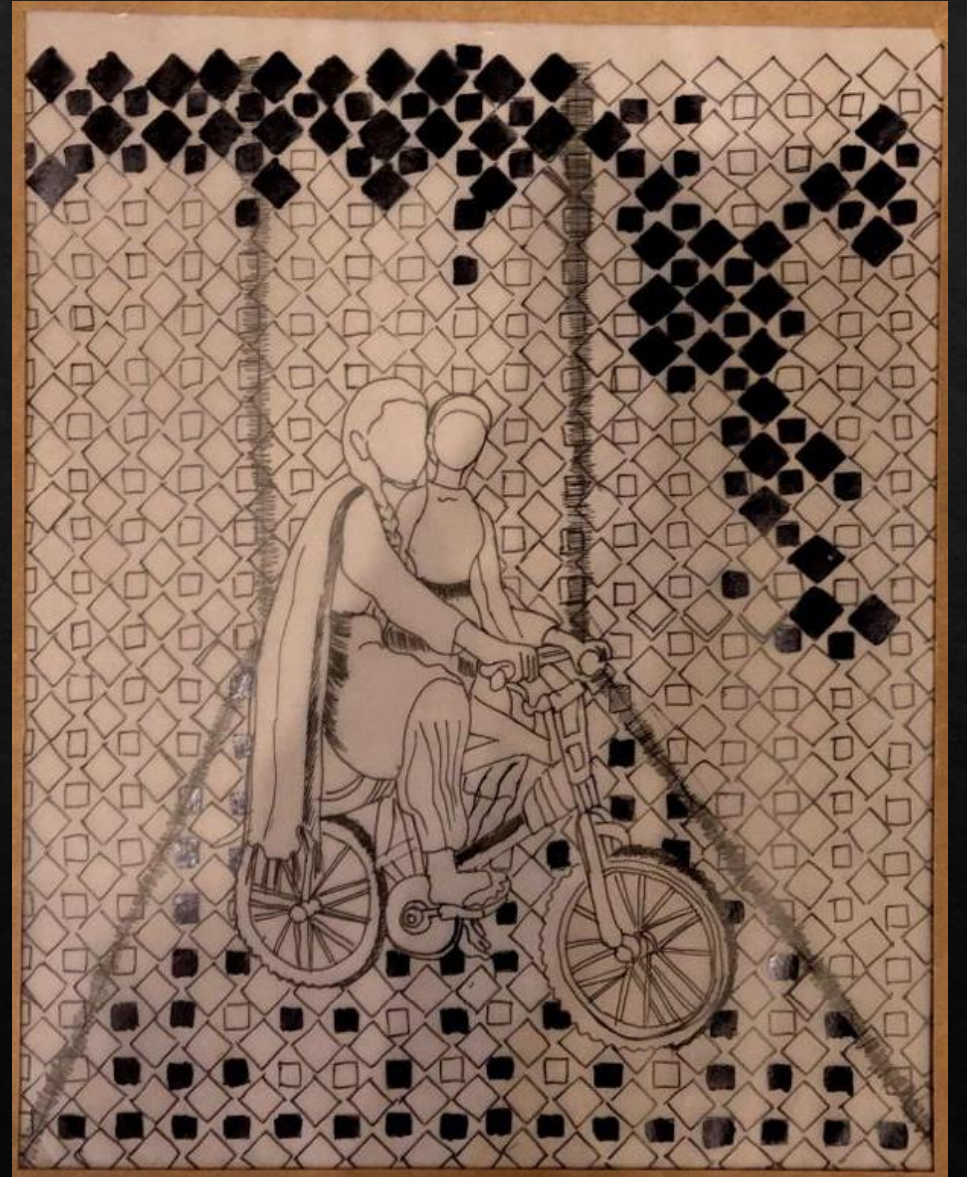


Linear drawings  
to fabrication  
using machine  
embroidery.





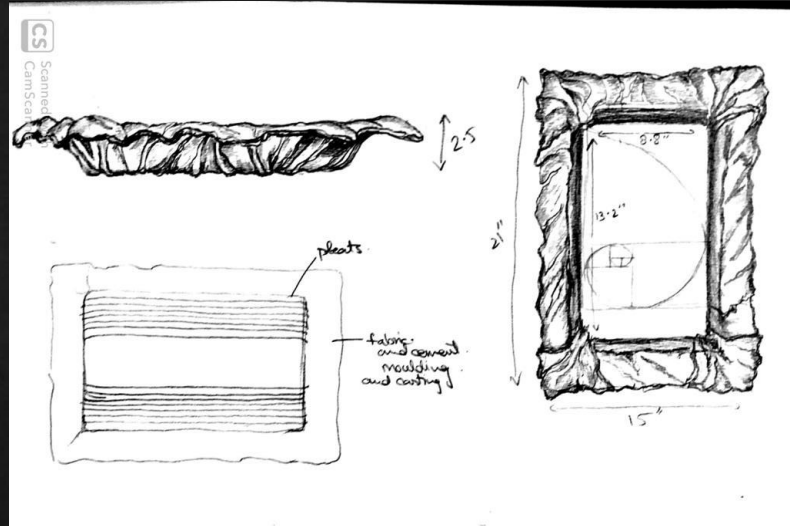
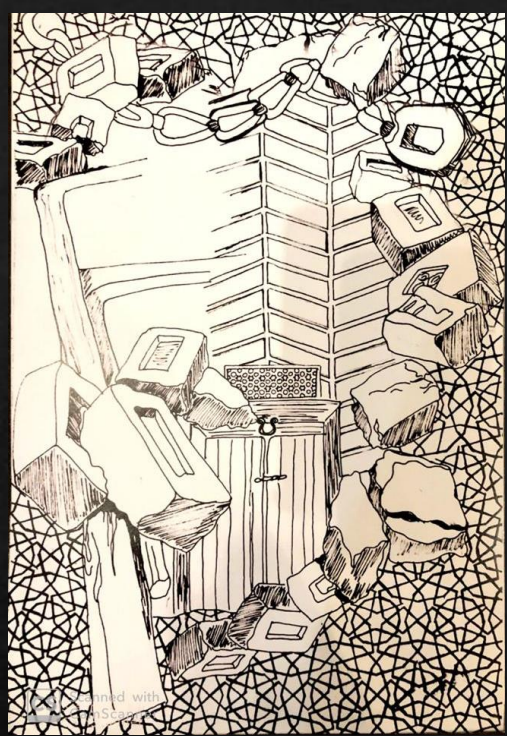
Over the years I have been titled perfectionist by people I worked with ,colleagues , friends due to the way I put effort to make each and ever project perfect and even to mundane everyday stuff. I have been a self-taught Artist and self-oriented perfectionist, and used it as therapy to strengthen myself through Art. I have developed a very pragmatic approach towards life with strong traits of advocacy for perfection, as a result of my experiences.











## Material and techniques Experimentation:

- Laser cutting & engraving (metal, wood, paper and plastic)
- Glass painting
- Emboss and high density printing
- Digital printing
- Felting
- Weaving
- Stamping/etching
- Ceramic.







Foil printing



Heat sublimation printing  
with machine Tilla  
embroidery.



Flock printing





When the heads of some Darwinists first came to light, many researchers hoped they might still hold fragments of "100." They were wronged by the art: a dating of the fossils — an estimated age of perhaps one to 2,000 years.

2004 analysis might have settled the debate over how these hominids fit into the hominid family tree. Some researchers argued that the bones simply belonged to a modern human in a growth disorder.

Others argued that they belonged to a much more distant branch of the human tree, evolving from a taller, more species called Homo erectus.

In 2001, Hockett Hooten, a geneticist at the Eijkman Institute for Molecular Biology in Indonesia, brought samples of Homo floresiensis to Dr. Green, then at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany.

Hard as he and his colleagues tried, they failed to get any definitive DNA from the fossils. "We could never really make sense of it," Dr. Green said.

Years later, Dr. Green and his colleagues made two important discoveries. They found that human and Neandertal interbred, about 1 percent of the DNA of living non-African humans comes from these vanished hominids.

And researchers discovered a separate branch of hominid, known as the Denisovans. Denisovans and humans also interbred, with the result that

deliberate theories as their tools, for example, derived by above from Grimes, plagiarizing his technique ("The concept of ..."). And even Grimes himself ... a monument of war, in that he ... and Duchamp's mind-altering ... stage through suggestion ... change that they were describing, ... inaudible, ... that they were expert ... and ... of deception, ... his subjects — but only ... to ...

as the stage hypothesis ... the hidden base — of all ... Other ... whether or not they admitted it. When ... Dods offered to teach ... inaudible, he was ... as a powerful ... secret, instead of ... being one of the ... All you had to do was sign up a private class — for a hefty fee, ... trying to take the word out ... his walls by calling him an ... people did. For even ... average, such accusations ... of only ... Control over the ... of deception was greatly ... Dods was telling ... to ... trying to defeat ... Calling it a rickshaw had that a ... public ... This ... is, ... named ... just fine, ... the more ... the more ... because ... the ... How about signing up for ... in the same way, exposing Mr. ...

JUST A LONG SILK TIE? —

SHARE YOUR ... To submit a ...

Through ... his hands ... possibility ... it's ... a ... their ... accusations ... so ... as ... the ... actually ... measuring ... the ...

Mr. Trump, ... someone ... with ... as the ... own ... how ... democratically ... did at a rally ... in Pennsylvania ... he came to ... as "fella ... from ... a ... that ... in his ... his ...

... to ... the ... in ... at least, in ... became Mr. ... up, as Dods ...

... on ... a ... the ... not the ... on ... on your ...

... the ... History of ... from his ... Computer ... the ... also ... using the ...

This is NOT

While finding the research gap I questioned every aspect of my own personal life, started to write it down and find out the hidden imperfections and my way of approaching the world. How events took place in my life and my struggles and how it's psychological effects developed me into an introvert I am today.



The pinnacle of perfectionism is very difficult to remain at and getting to perfectionism is actually a Utopia. Then there is no room to move forward or improve.

Repercussion of constantly pursuing perfection is disappointment specially for perfectionists. Physical capacity, Environmental, internal or external factors, family pressures could be reasons to not follow through.

Pursuit of perfection and the redefinition of our desire is that when we accept our imperfections, we become a better version of ourselves. Live without escape, embrace ourselves with gratitude and acknowledging ourselves. This may help us cure depression and continue to express our light by healing wounds.





Sampling





Techniques:

Crochet ,Hand embroidery ,Machine embroidery and heat sublimation printing.

Material: Jute, anchor threads , felt, silk thread and woollen threads

Experimented with different materials to transform postcards/drawings to textile medium.





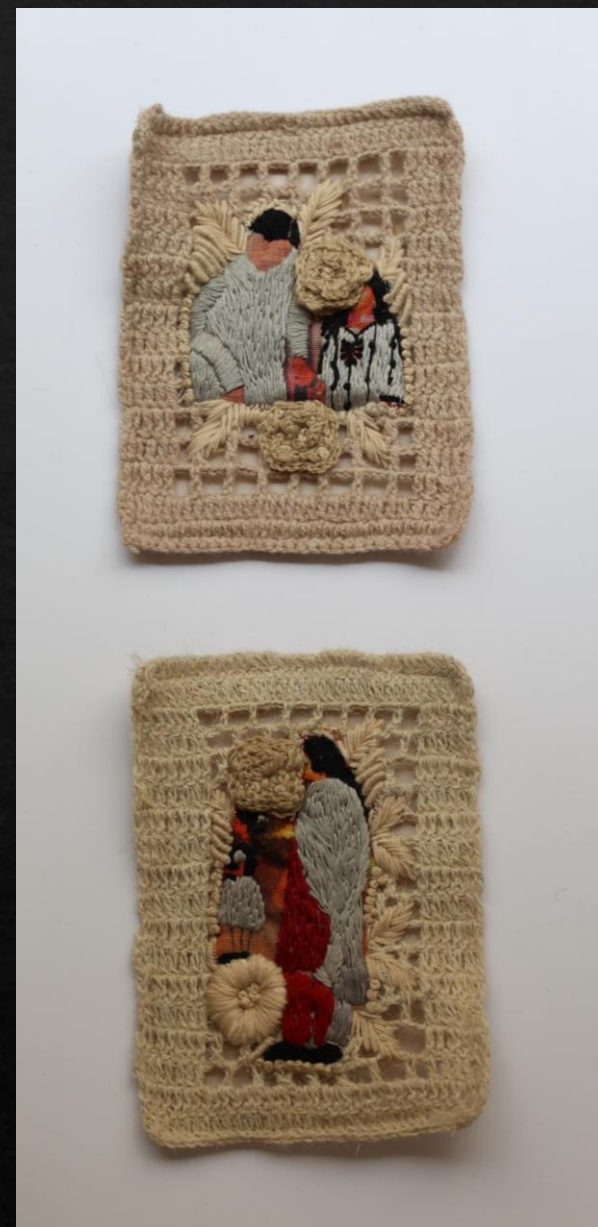








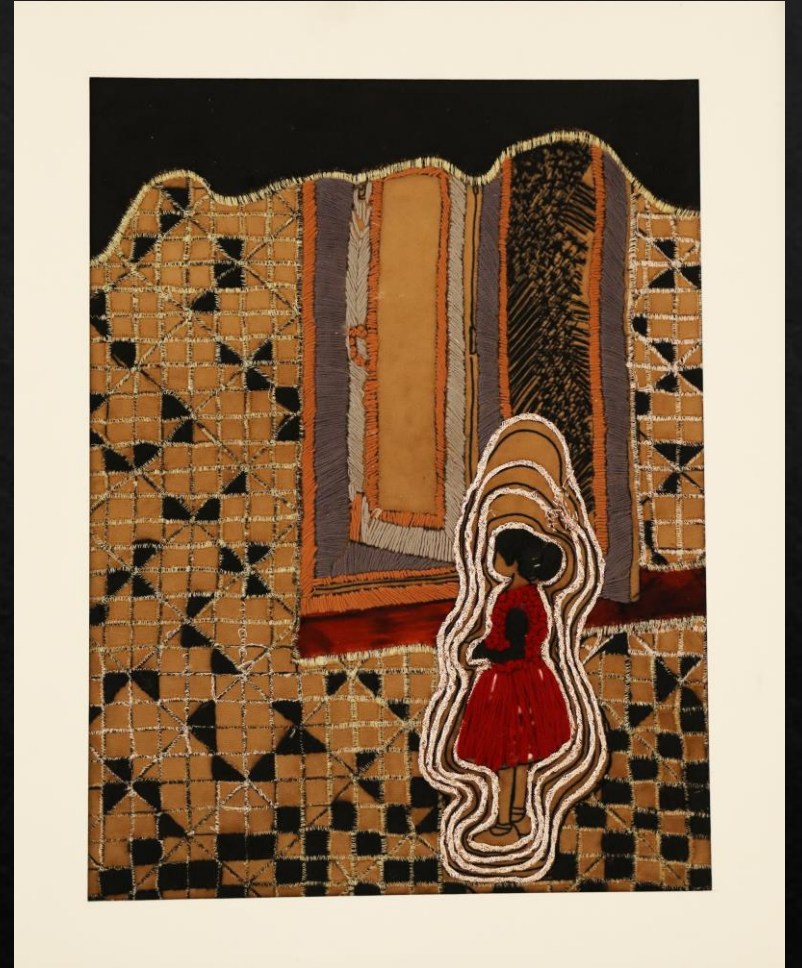














This work is an illustration from my imagination of time that I spend inside the room under control that is depicted through the grid and window that shows the hope of freedom. It is the depiction of how I physically grew with time but the inner child never grew older. I tried to capture that innocence in this frame that is composed based on the concept of golden ratio. I depicted in series using different techniques to explore.











This work is based on my life experiences and my journey towards the pursuit of perfectionism. I made this composition using arabesque pattern as divine presence in nature incorporated in figurative visual from my narrative to show conceptual essence of balance within my life. I used Mukaish as craft to depict control and command in my life and its rigidity, delicacy and to show beauty in pain and suffering. This work inspiration comes from the artist Nazgul Ansarania.





Final Project Journey



## Community based project

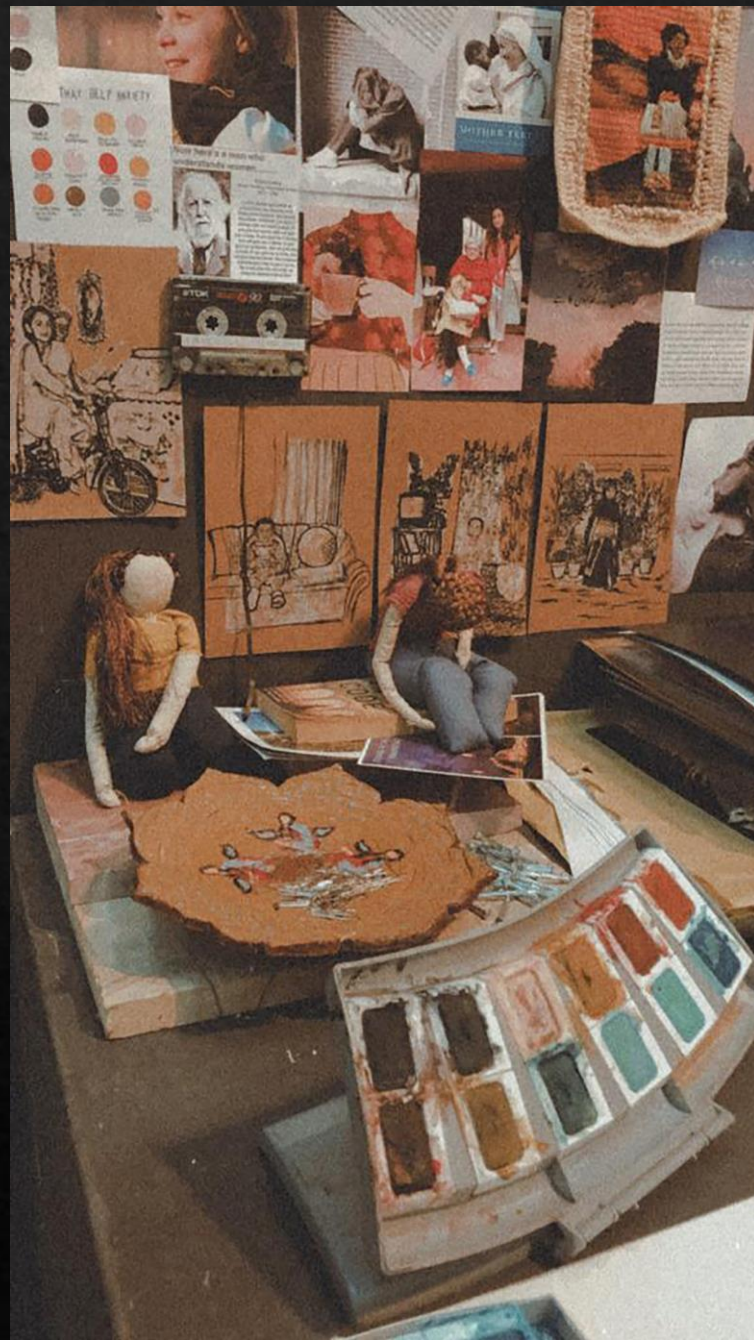
### Project : Between Before and Then

Is a community based project where I collected senior women in a nearby village who knew the craft of crochet, where I found 8 women who were willing to work on my idea of a home based project. I shared my narrative and their skills gave it practicality. I wanted them to self support themselves and give their life a new purpose. Together we teamed up. I gave each one of them different colours of threads to crochet. There was no design restriction but I did put a restriction on size to maintain uniformity. Each one of them has a different approach to this project and final 50 pieces were made for mini thesis and 120 for thesis (98 displayed).

During Lockdown (covid'19) project was not effected. This project became their source of earning in these hard times which encouraged them even more. I've given them more work, after the completion of my thesis work.







Studio space



Colour Gradation





Primary research :  
Ancestral home photography  
And observation of textures ,colors and patterns  
Written narrative  
And interviewed and written narrative of mother.







Colour palette was extracted through my room's photographs. Gradation for final pieces to depict I was trapped in physical control yet life was going on. I imagined the world outside as way to free, full of happiness and love but reality was quite different.

What ever the experiences of our lives are even then balance is achievable, in fact balance is there we are just explorers and with time we happen to find that balance. The time when I was moving towards negativity their was my religious belief that kept me composed. Their was a battle within myself which stopped me from going towards self destruction and self heal.



# Material Memory



## Carpet:

During research and collecting visuals for my final project I observed the presence of a carpet in my room that I found in archives and decided to use it for my final piece. These pieces hold an emotional value for viewer and through an object I seeped in the memories of past.

## Crochet:

It's a craft that was practiced in my family over the years. I had childhood association/ memories of how my mother and grandmother used to do crochet and make home textile and apparels using this technique.

## Felt:

I have been through a very difficult journey that most of my memories faded within time. The medium I used to express my emotions due to it's fragility and visual effect on the viewer.

## Hand Embroidery

My work was more subjective as Story behind it is quite complex, tough and to make it objective I added beauty, warmth and decoration to connect with a larger audience to my medium and build my personal style of work.

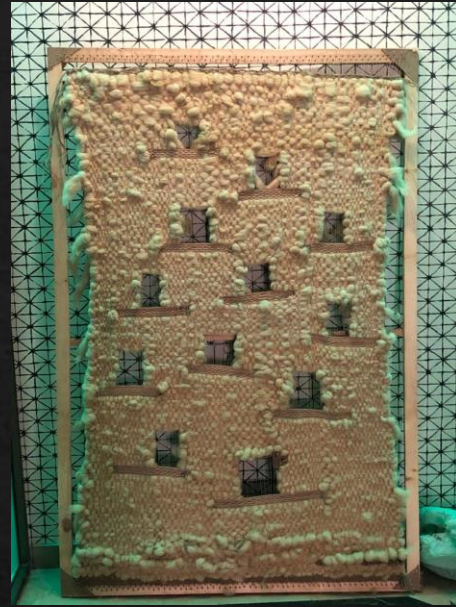






Photographs printed and hand embroidered attached with crochet pieces using sewing machine and finished using hand embroidery.





I wanted to follow the principles and features of geometric patterns: Symmetry, Repetition, Scalability, Adaptability, Coverage, Movement and Frames while making this work.





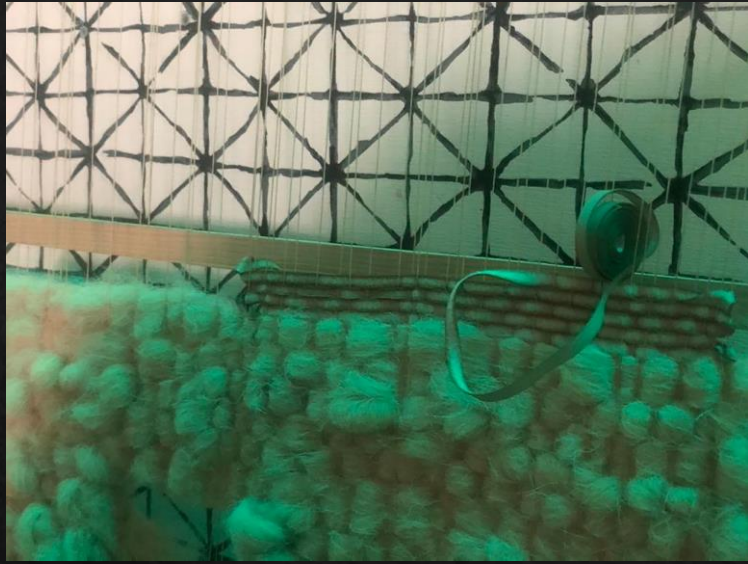
Serial no.2  
Arooj Mazhar

Characteristic of my work is the depiction of Isolation, imperfection, hope and confinement directly inspired by my experiences and emotions.

Presence of **carpet** in that room where I was stripped of freedom had material memories attached to it. I used it as a frame to contain the woven felt to turn my traumatic experience into art in order to maintain hope and express the realness of the narrative.

Prominence of **Red Colour** expresses the mental health, chosen due to its ambiguity and association to love and anger. This work involves psychological and spiritual evolution.









**Windows** as metaphor of freedom and hope. It allows the viewer to relate it with their own experience and story.

**Dolls** used to represent myself and many who experienced the same sort of isolation in their lives. Which becomes a barrier to our inner self, to our identity and imagination. These dolls are a depiction of millions souls suffering through isolation.

And I'd like to quote a verse from Oscar Wilde's poem Her Voice:

"Ships tempest-tossed  
Will find a harbor in some bay,  
And so we may."



Thesis 2020







Abstract



## Semblance of Perfection

The concept of my thesis is based upon my pursuit of perfectionism that derived from circumstances that were beyond my control during developing years of my life Influenced by abandoned childhood, isolation, coupled with trauma of loss of my Father and abusive experiences with relatives. In attempt to exercise that control I observed patterns in nature to achieve balance in other areas of my life struggled between the paradox of choices.

Affirmation of ourselves does not depend on the destruction and exploitation of others. I wanted to depict my vision about life how I try to create order and to find a balance to overcome pain and strengthen myself. Using woolen threads and techniques of crochet and hand embroidery I reframe my sensitivity, empathy and emotional self as a strength through my work. Severe losses and disruption in lives lead perfectionism may actually be a way to attempt to remain safe, to distance the self from intense feelings or perceived threat using art as therapy.

The experience of indifference from the surrounding world or malevolence may cause children to suffer loose the meaning in their construction of themselves in this world. When we continue to heal wounds we express our light.

Through this thesis I want to share my experience that I did at very young age, took negative and turned it into positive. In attempt to spread empowering message to youngsters and lesson for parents. Test my own individual will power. In the silence I find inspirational and in the chaos of life I sculpted intangible hope.





Titled: Confinement

Size: 5.3ft x 7.6 ft

Material: felt, woollen threads,  
anchor threads, dried branches

Old carpet used as Material  
Memory

Technique: Off loom weaving,  
Hand embroidery ,Crochet &  
Hand woven carpet.





Details.

Serial no.4  
Arooj Mazhar





Serial no.6  
Arooj Mazhar



serial no.10  
Arooj Mazhar











Titled: Between Before and Then





Serial no.17  
Arooj Mazhar



Serial no.21  
Arooj Mazhar



Serial no.19  
Arooj Mazhar





## Statement:

The work is about socio upbringing and it's psychological effects. Parents ownership of their children and protectiveness toward them leaves effects on their personalities in developing years of their life. These pieces shows my journey of 12 years abandoned by my parents in a Room ended with loss of my father. All my life I had struggled through inability to interact and share my voice with the world. I developed an introvert personality but strive for perfection gave me hope. The redefinition of desires is that we come to know our true selves. Life cannot be consistent, Gradation is part of it and aesthetic changes with time through hard realities and imagination.







Serial no.16  
Arooj Mazhar



Serial no 24  
Arooj Mazhar



Serial no.14  
Arooj Mazhar



25-Arooj Mazhar



Series of work: 96  
Size each piece: 7"x 9"





16-Arooj Mazhar











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