

Afifa Bashir

New Media Art

Final Portfolio: Artist Statements

Image Module: 'Reclaiming my Self-Identity'

'Reclaiming my Self-Identity' is a recollection of emotional attachments with people in my 23 years of existence. It is a personal visual journal archiving specific jewelry pieces using my own body as the subject. What inspired me to produce this piece of artwork was Bani Abidi's extensive archive of the typologies of security barriers, Shirin Neshat, 'Women of Allah' series and Shadi Gadiran 'Domestic Life' montage series. I intended to create postcards as a way to catalog my personal connection with these jewelry pieces that I wear as a form of self-expression. The reason I chose the layout of postcards is because they are intimate, personal and raw. Every postcard narrates a story, creates an experience, journal a thought with the help of different themes emerging from these jewelry pieces. Therefore, bridging together these postcards compels me to express myself through physical appearance and to paint a certain picture of my identity in the mind of others. Precisely, there are mere jewelry pieces that to an outsider on a surface level, but deep down I carry, I hold onto and I've let go of some emotional attachments with the people associated with these jewelry statements. I have intended to create this as a way to reclaim my self-identity through piercings and accessorizing myself intentionally and specifically. To reclaim my clothing and my choice on body back as a way to express myself.

Moving Image: 'White is not the highlight'

The internalization of equating white complexion to beauty, to success, to dominance, to enslaver, to property-owner and to superior is a direct consequence of colonialism. The obsession over white complexion in the South Asian context is exhausting and mentally taxing and comes at a cost which women has to go through. We have set fairer complexion as a pre-requisite to exist in this society. The capitalist market of fairness creams, YouTube videos on 'ghar kay totkay' or medical applications hiring cosmetologists insanely thrive on the basis of selling the white skin supremacy narrative to the audience. Hence, this video will illuminate advertisements of fairness creams, whitening injections and ghar kay totkay designed to convince the audience especially women to fall prey to societal beauty myths. The video is accumulating short videos of fairness creams advertisement, of quick hacks to get a whiter complexion in morning shows, of whitening injections and juxtaposing it with text to present the

concerning issue at face and then trying to create an anti- white complexion narrative. It is created with this intention that the wordings, the statements, the visual language, the representation of specific girls employed in advertisements, in morning shows, in YouTube videos, in phone applications perpetuates and upholds the colonial mindset of equating white skin to positive and bold affirmations.

Sound Assignment: 'Musafir'

In 2018 December, I took a first ever trip to Lahore with friends. It made me taste what independence looks like and at what cost. The trip itself wasn't a rewarding experience however, the few memorable moments that I get to share with the people I went, I decided to turn that into a sound track with the help of vlogs that I made. Inspired by Fazal Rizvi's 'Rooms Afloat' piece of art, I wanted to create sound as an experience for the audience to go through. It's intended to be abstract for the audience to feel a variety of different emotions rather than the stated one; joy. This sound assignment is a way to relive the independent experience again and to reminiscence the few of the memorable moments spent in Lahore. Primarily, it the experience that I managed to create to be able to interact with the city.