

Naqsh Raj- 以隐藏来揭示， 以秩序获得慰藉

Naqsh Raj-Hiding as a way of revealing; Order as a way of finding solace



Naqsh Raj 近照（受访人供图）

受访：**Naqsh Raj**（娜克什·拉吉）

采访：艺术菌

编辑：艺术菌

Recent Photo of Naqsh Raj (courtesy of the interviewee)

Interviewee: Naqsh Raj

Interviewer: Art Jun

Editor: Art Jun

娜克什·拉吉（1984 年生）是一位居住于伊斯兰堡的艺术家兼教育者。她拥有拉合尔国立艺术学院视觉艺术硕士学位，并在巴基斯坦从事艺术与设计教学逾十年，曾在英国任教数年。

她的画作非常具有个人风格，蕴含着一种张力：自由随意、有机流动的笔触，与机械式的颜料涂抹相互碰撞。这种绘画与版画技法之间奇特的交融，创造出富有质感的生动画面，厚重的颜料引人产生触觉上的回应。在垂直条纹的背后，有时会透出表达的喧响，以原始粗犷的痕迹沾染网格，抗拒被完全束缚。

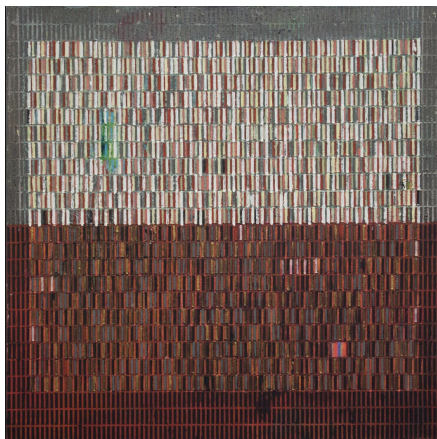
艺术家作品中网格与秩序的呈现，是一种根植于日常的习惯，一种近乎本能的审美与生活方式。网格成为了一种秩序的框架，为艺术家带来慰藉，成为艺术家探索重复、差异、时间与感知的媒介，承载着日常的碎片与个体的记忆。

★★

Naqsh Raj (b. 1984) is an artist and educator based in Islamabad. She holds a Master's degree in Visual Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore, and has over a decade of experience teaching art and design in Pakistan, including several years spent teaching in the United Kingdom.

Her paintings possess a highly distinctive style marked by tension—freely flowing, organic brushwork collides with mechanical, methodical applications of paint. This unusual fusion of painting and printmaking techniques results in richly textured, dynamic compositions, where thick layers of pigment evoke a visceral, tactile response. Behind the vertical stripes, expressions sometimes burst through, their raw, rugged marks staining the grid and resisting complete containment.

In her work, the presence of grids and order reflects a deeply rooted daily practice—an almost instinctive aesthetic and way of life. The grid becomes a framework of order, offering the artist solace, while also serving as a medium through which she explores repetition, difference, time, and perception, carrying fragments of everyday life and personal memory.



缺失 Deficiencies

ART YSJ: 您提到您的艺术实践源于所处环境中的“缺失”，能否具体说明这些“缺失”指的是什么？它们是物质层面的、社会性的，还是更多与情感和心理层面相关？

娜克什·拉吉: 巴基斯坦社会及其体制中存在的一系列结构性缺失，深刻地影响了我的生活和创作实践。缺乏回应性的系统营造出一种充满恐惧与沉默不适的氛围，这使我远离了传统的规训方式。作为回应，我逐渐倾向于一种重复性的标记行为。这种重复为我带来了可预见性和规律感——一种可以不断回归的稳定状态，同时也成为我应对不确定性的途径，并通过“创造”这一行为重新获得主体性。

作为一名女性和母亲，我始终缺乏连续的时间与独立的空间，导致我的创作只能以碎片化的形式存在。这种碎片化也体现在我的构图中：画面被分割成若干方块，正如同我的时间、注意力和创造力不断被切割、被协商的现实。

我在俾路支省长大，那里城市景观和商业色彩极为稀少，这种环境让我对“缺席”本身变得异常敏感。在我的作品一贯的结构之中，色彩反而成了变量。多年来，我对色彩的运用一直是直觉性的；而随着时间推移，我逐渐在既定结构中发展出更强的色彩控制力。这一过程既映射了我生活的轨迹，反过来也帮助我的生活获得了某种结构。

ART YSJ: You mention that your artistic practice stems from the "deficiencies" of your surrounding environment. Could you elaborate on what these "deficiencies" specifically refer to? Are they material, social, or more related to emotional and psychological dimensions?

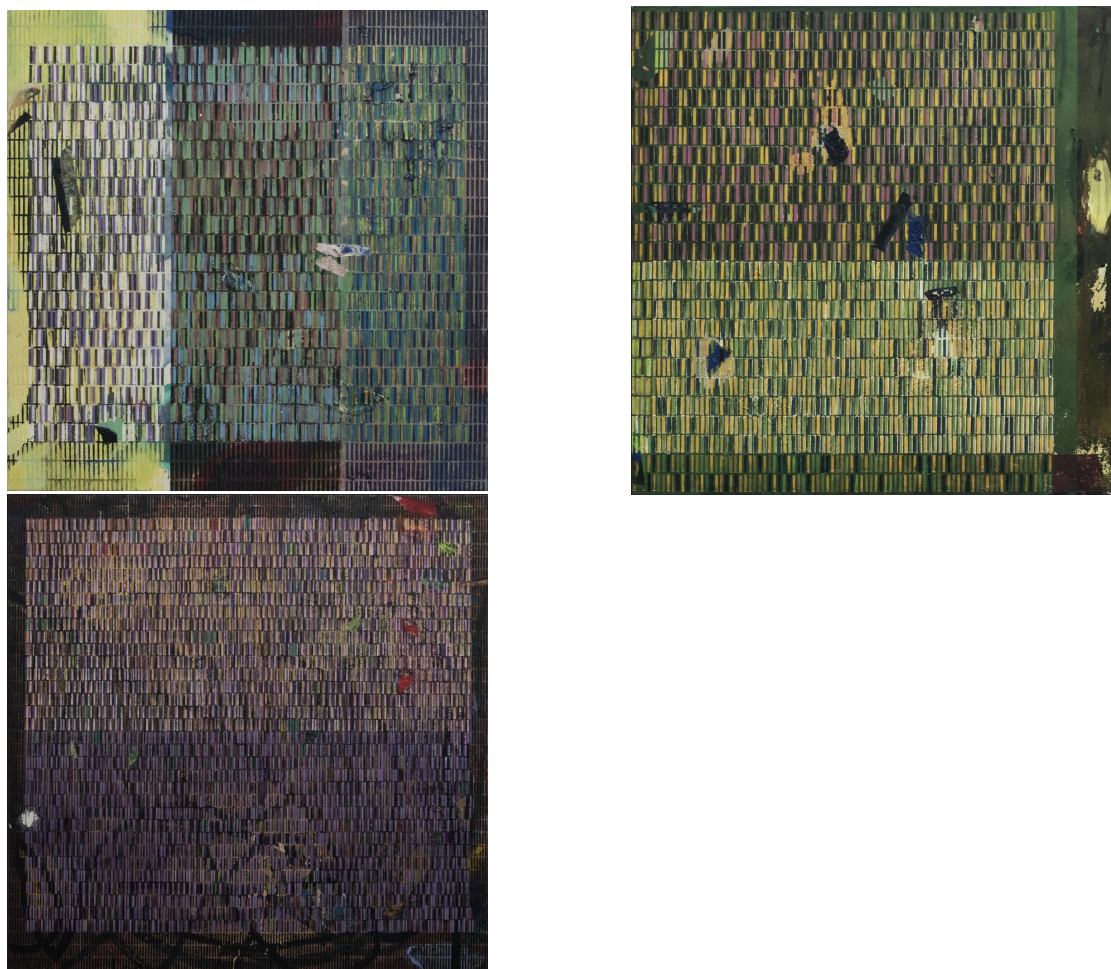
Naqsh Raj: A set of structural absences within Pakistani society and its institutions has deeply shaped both my life and my creative practice. The lack of responsive systems created an atmosphere of fear and quiet discomfort, which kept me at a distance from conventional discipline. In response, I gravitated towards a repetitive form of mark-making. This repetition offered me predictability and routine, something stable to return to, while also becoming a way to process uncertainty and regain a sense of agency through the act of making.

As a woman and a mother, the absence of uninterrupted time and space caused my practice to exist in fragments. This fragmentation is visible in my compositions, where squares are divided, mirroring the way my time, attention, and creative energy have been continually split and negotiated.

Growing up in Balochistan, where urban and commercial color is scarce, sharpened my awareness of what was absent. Within the constant structure of my work, color becomes the variable. For many years, color operated intuitively; over time, I have

developed a greater sense of color control within the structure. The process reflects both the patterns of my life and, in return, has helped give structure to it.

一种趋向序列性的创作冲动 An impulse toward seriality



ART YSJ: 网格在您的作品中扮演着核心角色——作为秩序的框架和一种慰藉的来源。您最初是如何将网格确立为基本结构的？是否受到建筑、城市规划或日常生活中某些模式的影响？

娜克什·拉吉: 我一直以来都有一种趋向序列性的创作冲动。即使在我早期的具象创作中，也明显表现出对收集与排列的强烈偏好。网格正是从这种倾向中自然形成的。虽然我在形式上并未直接受到建筑的启发，但我深深被建筑的功能所吸引——当空间被有意识地划分时，所带来的便利以及心理上的舒适感。

在一个既定画面上，决定重复出现的母题（例如垂直线）的尺度与位置，常常让我感到一种张力。这些权衡过程不可避免地建筑思维相关，即便只是间接的关联。

ART YSJ: The grid plays a central role in your work—as a framework of order and a source of comfort. How did you first come to adopt the grid as a foundational structure? Was it influenced by architecture, urban planning, or patterns in everyday life?

Naqsh Raj: I have always worked with an impulse toward seriality. Even in my earlier representational work, there was a strong inclination toward collection and arrangement. The grid emerged naturally from this tendency. While I am not directly inspired by architecture in a formal sense, I am deeply drawn to its function, the ease and psychological comfort that come from compartmentalizing space when it is done thoughtfully.

Deciding the scale and placement of a repeated motif, such as the vertical line, within a given surface is often a point of tension for me. These negotiations inevitably relate to architectural thinking, even if indirectly.

我必须同时栖居的两个世界

Two worlds that I needed to inhabit simultaneously

ART YSJ: 您的创作过程独特地将基于模板的版画技法融入到强调手势表现的绘画中。您能否分享一下这种创作方式是如何发展起来的？是否有一个特定的时刻或顿悟，促使您将这两种看似对立的方法结合在一起？

娜克什·拉吉：在我的求学时期（本科 2004–2008 年，硕士 2009–2010 年），尽管学习的是人物素描和油画，但我始终比精湛的写实技巧更着迷于艺术家的调色板。我喜欢颜料真实混合的过程，创造出新的色调与层次；那种坦率、直接的用色方式令我着迷。我开始把绷紧的画布当作调色板来使用——它们并非为了展出，而是作为个人观察与感知的私密对象。

早年我也曾为一些商业项目（比如 T 恤印花或壁画）零星使用过模板，但当时只是作为一种按时完成工作的实用手段。这段经历一直留存在我心中，后来逐渐演变成为一种减少人为误差的上色工具。到了 2014 年，我对具象表达的兴趣已完全消退。我已经“摆脱”了学院式的精确性，失去了一些控制力，同时也积累了不少恐惧。为了重新获得某种结构性的感受，我开始使用单格模板，但与此同时，我又坚持着自己在用笔上追求自由的本能。

将模板与手势性绘画相结合的过程历经多年。每一个决定都经过反复试验、不断调整，并最终以一种有意识的方式逐步融入创作之中。对我而言，这一过程实现了控制与即兴、结构与直觉之间的平衡——这是我必须同时栖居的两个世界。

ART YSJ: Your process uniquely integrates stencil-based printmaking techniques into gestural painting. Could you share how this approach developed? Was there a

particular moment or realization that led you to combine these seemingly contrasting methods?

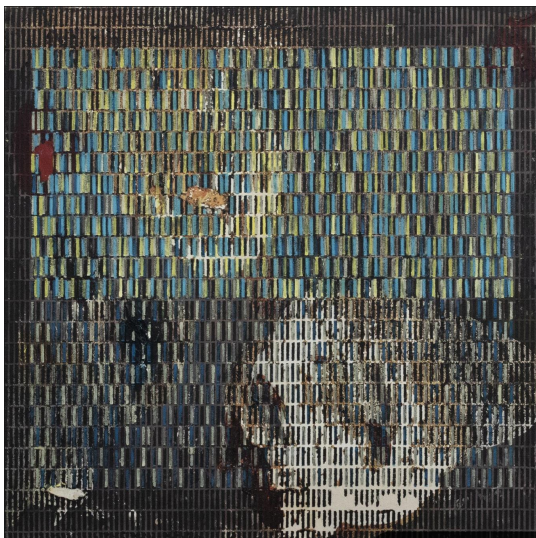
Naqsh Raj: During my academic years (BFA 2004–2008, MAVA 2009–2010), while studying life drawing and oil painting, I was always more drawn to the artist's palette than to skillful representational work. I resonated with the genuine mixing of paint, creating new tones and layers; the honest application of paint fascinated me. I began using stretched canvases as palettes, not for exhibition, but as personal objects of seeing.

I had used stencils a few times earlier for commercial projects, like T-shirt printing or murals, but only as a practical way to finish a project on time. That experience stayed with me, and later re-emerged as a tool to apply paint while minimizing human error. By 2014, my interest in representation had declined completely. I had “unlearned” academic precision, lost some control, and accumulated fear. To regain a sense of structure, I began using single-cell stencils, but I also remained true to my instinct for freedom in paint application.

The integration of stencil and gesture took many years. Decisions were tested, refined, and gradually incorporated in a conscious way. For me, the process balances control and spontaneity, structure and intuition, two worlds that I needed to inhabit simultaneously.

以隐藏来揭示

Hiding as a way of revealing





ART YSJ: 在垂直线条或网格的背后，常常浮现出粗犷而原始的笔迹——仿佛是一种表现性的躁动，试图冲破控制。这种张力是您从一开始就刻意营造并保留的，还是创作后期经过反思而叠加的结果？

娜克什·拉吉： 我的创作始于用有机的笔触激活空白画布，这些笔触看起来很像艺术家的调色板。在叠加了几层厚薄不一的颜料之后，我再通过模板加入新的印记。对我而言，这个过程是一种“以隐藏来揭示”的方式。透过这些间隙窥视，可以了解到作品中颜料层层堆叠的历史。

在早期阶段，我会从一开始就留出某些区域不加覆盖，这些暴露的部分常常决定了我停止的位置，并促使我走向更大的空隙。而现在，我更倾向于通过遮盖那些吸引我的区域来实现“揭示”。遮蔽的方式更符合我目前的创作节奏，并引入了一种意外性——因为我通常要到创作最后才将遮蔽物揭开。那一刻，我的情绪会从重复的单调感转向惊喜的发现感，从而使控制与表达性躁动之间的张力得以持续存在，而非被彻底解决。

ART YSJ: Behind the vertical lines or grids, raw and primal marks often emerge—traces of what might be described as expressive unrest trying to break through control. Is this tension intentional and preserved from the beginning, or is it the result of a later, reflective layering in the process?

Naqsh Raj: I begin by activating the blank canvas with organic brushwork that resembles an artist's palette. After building a few thick and thin layers, I introduce marks through stencils. For me, the process involves hiding as a way of revealing. Peering through the gaps offers information about the history of paint application within the work.

In the early years, I would leave certain areas exposed from the start, which often dictated where I stopped and pushed me toward larger gaps. Now, the revealing happens through masking the areas I'm drawn to. Masking feels more natural to my

process and introduces an element of surprise, as I mostly peel it away at the end. That moment shifts my mood from monotony to discovery, allowing the tension between control and expressive unrest to remain active rather than resolved.

回到童年，父亲的影响 Back to her childhood, Father's Influence

ART YSJ: 分享一个在创作过程中对您而言特别有意义或具有转折意义的时刻或故事？一个让您与作品产生深刻连接，或在理解上获得突破的瞬间？

娜克什·拉吉: 在这里，我想带您回到我的童年。我的父亲除了拥有弗吉尼亚大学教育学博士学位外，还用乌尔都语撰写了一部两卷本的统计学参考书。这部著作的写作始于我出生前后，直到我十八岁时才最终完成。我是在这本书逐步成形的过程中长大的。他写作和思考的时光，构成了我童年游戏与生活的背景。我记得自己常常坐在他身旁，安静地看着他长时间专注地工作。

他每张稿纸下面都会仔细垫上一张自制的格线底稿——用蓝色圆珠笔绘制，右侧留出红色边距，左侧是绿色边距。由于纸张薄而质地较差，底下的线条总是清晰可见。这些底稿还用透明胶带加固，以便反复使用多年。这种严谨而重复的做法，我一连看了许多年。

如今回望，我才真正意识到，那种静默中的自律对我影响有多深——那份耐心、对结构的珍视，以及一种信念：秩序并非束缚思想，而是温柔地承载着思想前行。

ART YSJ: Finally, could you share a moment or story from your creative process that was especially meaningful or transformative for you? A time when you felt a deep connection to your work or a breakthrough in understanding?

Naqsh Raj: I have already touched upon memories and incidents that have transformed my work, but here I would like to take you back to my childhood. My father, apart from being a PhD in Education from the University of Virginia, also wrote a two-volume reference book on statistics in urdu. The work began around the time of my birth and was completed when I was eighteen. I grew up watching this book take shape. Much of my playtime unfolded around him while he was writing and thinking. I remember sitting close by, observing him work in long stretches of silence. Beneath each sheet of paper, there was always a lined guide placed carefully underneath. He had drawn the guide sheet himself, using a blue ballpoint pen, with a red margin on the right and a green margin on the left. Through the thin, low-quality paper, the lines were always visible. The guide sheets were reinforced with transparent tape so they could last longer. I saw this same practice repeated for years. Looking back now, I realize how deeply this quiet discipline stayed with me, the patience, the care for structure, and the belief that order can gently hold thought, rather than restrict it.

新的创作方向 New Direction

ART YSJ: 您的视觉语言仍在持续演进。展望未来，您是否设想打破现有的结构——例如解构网格、探索非平面媒介，或引入声音、时间等元素？您目前正在探索哪些新的方向？

娜克什·拉吉: 我早期的创作曾尝试对网格进行实验——我会重叠它、拉开它，让一些东西以略显突兀的方式显露出来。但随着时间推移，我越来越不倾向于明显的实验性手法，因为我认为这有时会稀释作品本身的表达力。曾有人建议我使用纸本创作，以便于在国际间流通，但我选择不这么做。在我看来，纸仍然是一种平面媒介，而目前我并未从中感受到进一步发展的可能性。相反，我并不把绷紧的画布视为平面，而是将它们看作物体。直到最近，我才开始特别关注绘画的边缘部分。我发现边缘往往比画面中心更具挑战性，因为模板与画布边界的对齐在最终完成作品时起着关键作用。

我一直在思考将画布绷在立方体结构上进行创作。我画中那些方形构图，在很大程度上正是受到“立方体”这一概念的启发——在我看来，它是一种强有力且极具吸引力的形式。过去，我也曾通过“序列性”的概念涉足过表演艺术，这种思维方式至今仍持续影响着我的创作实践。

最近，我经历了东方古典音乐的声乐训练。在这个传统中，音乐作品通过声音的排列组合构建而成，并与一天中的特定时刻相关联。由于我的创作本身已涉及色彩的排列变化，我现在正探索我的绘画在不同时间光线下的转变。我开始使用金属颜料，它们的视觉效果会随光线变化而改变，从而使“时间”成为作品中一个活跃的参与元素。

ART YSJ: Your visual language continues to evolve. Looking ahead, do you envision breaking away from the existing structures—such as dismantling the grid, exploring non-flat media, or incorporating elements like sound or time? What directions are you currently exploring?

Naqsh Raj: My preliminary works included experimenting with the grid. I overlapped it, pulled it apart, and allowed things to become awkwardly visible. Over time, I have felt less inclined toward overt experimentation, as I think it can sometimes dilute the voice of the work. I was advised to work on paper because it is easier to circulate worldwide, but I chose not to. I still see paper as a flat medium, and at this stage I do not sense further possibilities emerging from it. I do not see stretched canvases as flat surfaces; I see them as objects. Only recently have I started paying careful attention to the edges of the paintings. I often find the edges more challenging than the central area, because the alignment of the stencil with the boundaries plays an important role in resolving the work. I have been thinking about working with canvases stretched over cubic forms. The square compositions in my paintings are largely inspired by the idea of the cube,

which I see as a strong and compelling form. In the past, I have also worked with performance through the concept of seriality, and this way of thinking continues to inform my practice.

More recently, I have had the experience of voice training in Eastern classical music. In this tradition, compositions are built through permutations of sound and are tied to specific times of the day. Since my work already deals with color permutation, I am now exploring how my paintings shift at different times of day. I am using metallic pigments that change in appearance with light, allowing time to become an active element in the work.

