FEROZA HAKEEM

Where The River Bends,
I Begin Again.



Curated by
Khushboo Jain

Opening
23 September 2026

pristine
contemporary

PRISTINE CONTEMPORARY
Saini Bhawan, Bhisham Pitamah
Marg Kotla, New Delhi - 110003

Where the River Bends, I Begin Again

A river moves in gentle bends, yielding to the contours of the land, and in doing so reshaping both itself and the landscape it travels through. It carries with it traces of every place it has touched, even as it discovers a new course.

This enduring spirit finds resonance in Feroza Hakeem's paintings, where the river is more than a recurring presence; cultivating resilience and renewal.

Born into a Hazara family shaped by generations of displacement and persecution, Hakeem's practice emerges from deeply personal histories of violence. Her motherland, Quetta, often exists beyond its borders as a geography of headlines, a frontier city marked by sectarian violence, displacement, military presence, and the long precarity of its Hazara community. These realities remain urgent, yet they also risk becoming totalising, reducing both a place and its people to the circumstances of their suffering.

While her practice does not deny violence, they do, however, refuse to grant it a visual sovereignty. Her paintings unfold through winding rivers, flowering orchards, towering mountains, and skies washed in light. Out of fraught terrain emerge vivid blossoms and flowing streams, where the landscape itself becomes an emotional topography of her experience as a Hazara woman. Drawing upon Persian visual traditions, Hakeem repeatedly returns to the apricot and the cedar, wherein, the apricot is associated with femininity and renewal, while the cedar with steadfastness and strength. In her hands, these inherited symbols become acts of reclamation, imagining abundance where history has sought erasure.

Hakeem's landscapes are not only witnesses to loss; they are rehearsals for another way of inhabiting Quetta and another way of seeing Hazara life. It poses the proposition of whether beauty itself can become a political gesture, an act of repair, rather than escape?

Where the River Bends, I Begin Again invites us to embody resilience as continual reshaping of one's course, gathering, returning, and finding new channels to flow through.

—Khushboo Jain



Feroza Hakeem

Feroza Hakeem (b. 1995) is a Pakistani artist based in Quetta, working primarily in miniature painting to explore themes of displacement, inherited grief, and resilience within the Hazara community. A graduate of the National College of Arts, Lahore, she has exhibited internationally, including at the Lahore Biennale, Asia Now Paris Fair, and a residency at Latitudes Contemporaines in Lille, France.

Feroza Hakeem (born in 1995; lives and works in Quetta, Pakistan) draws inspiration from the familiar landscapes surrounding the Hazāra neighborhoods of Quetta, her hometown. Hilly slopes and natural elements featured in her works take on a metaphorical dimension, evoking experiences of violence, inherited grief, and the resilience passed down within the Pakistani Hazāra community. Trained in miniature painting at the National College of Arts (Lahore, Pakistan), she has participated in the Lahore Biennale in 2024, and has completed a one-month residency at Latitudes Contemporaines (Lille, 2025).

Coming from a family of Hazara community and having the first-hand experience of oppression she allows her grief to transform into these strange landscapes of her surroundings where the beautiful mountains represent her home, an apricot tree may represent a woman (in Persian tradition) and a cedar tree a protective man. Her works yet show her resilience and hope for a better future.

Using nature as a metaphor for social relations and identity formation, Hakeem skilfully appropriates the visual language of miniature painting traditionally used by the ruling Mughals and Persians to express the plight of the long-oppressed and displaced Hazaras.

Selected Exhibitions

2025 — Residency, Latitudes Contemporaines, Lille, France
2025 — Asia Now Paris Fair, Paris, France
2025 — Composed Realities, three-person show, O Art Space, Lahore
2025 — Roshni, group show, London
2025 — Noor, group show, Pristine India, Delhi
2024 — My Loved Ones, solo show, Numaishgah
2024 — Art Fair, Muscat (Numaishgah)
2024 — Lahore Biennale, Lahore
2023 — Air Turns Breathless, solo show, Numaishgah
2022 — Firefly Dreams, group show, Muse Art Gallery, Lahore
2018 — The Real and Its Double, Embassy of France group exhibition, Islamabad
2017 — Belt and Road, group exhibition, Suzhou University Museum, China

Artist Statement

My artwork channels hope and resilience born from the profound struggles of my Hazara identity. The Hazara community has faced systemic oppression for centuries, a reality reflected in my own family's journey. My grandfather fled Afghanistan to escape religious persecution, only to confront new challenges in Pakistan. As a member of a marginalized group making up just 0.25% of the population, I experienced bullying and cultural alienation, prompting deep reflection on my identity.

A turning point came in 2018, when my brother was killed in a targeted attack in Quetta, a tragedy that brought my artistic practice to a halt. Grief and fear overwhelmed me, and for a time, I felt trapped by my circumstances. Yet from this darkness, I found the strength to use art as a protest against the discrimination and violence Hazaras endure.

In my work, I portray Quetta's rugged landscapes softened by flowers and streams, symbolizing hope for peace. Portraits of Hazara women honor their resilience and the weight of loss, while trees represent my sense of displacement, reflecting a struggle for safety in one's homeland.



With and Without you | 2026
Wood cut printing and Gouache on Handmade paper
13 inches x 10 inches | INR 1,75,000 each







Where Dreams Wander | 2026
Gouache, Phototransfer on Handmade paper
10 inches x 13 inches | INR 1,50,000





Thinking About You | 2026
Gouache on Arches paper
13 inches x 10 inches | INR 1,50,000



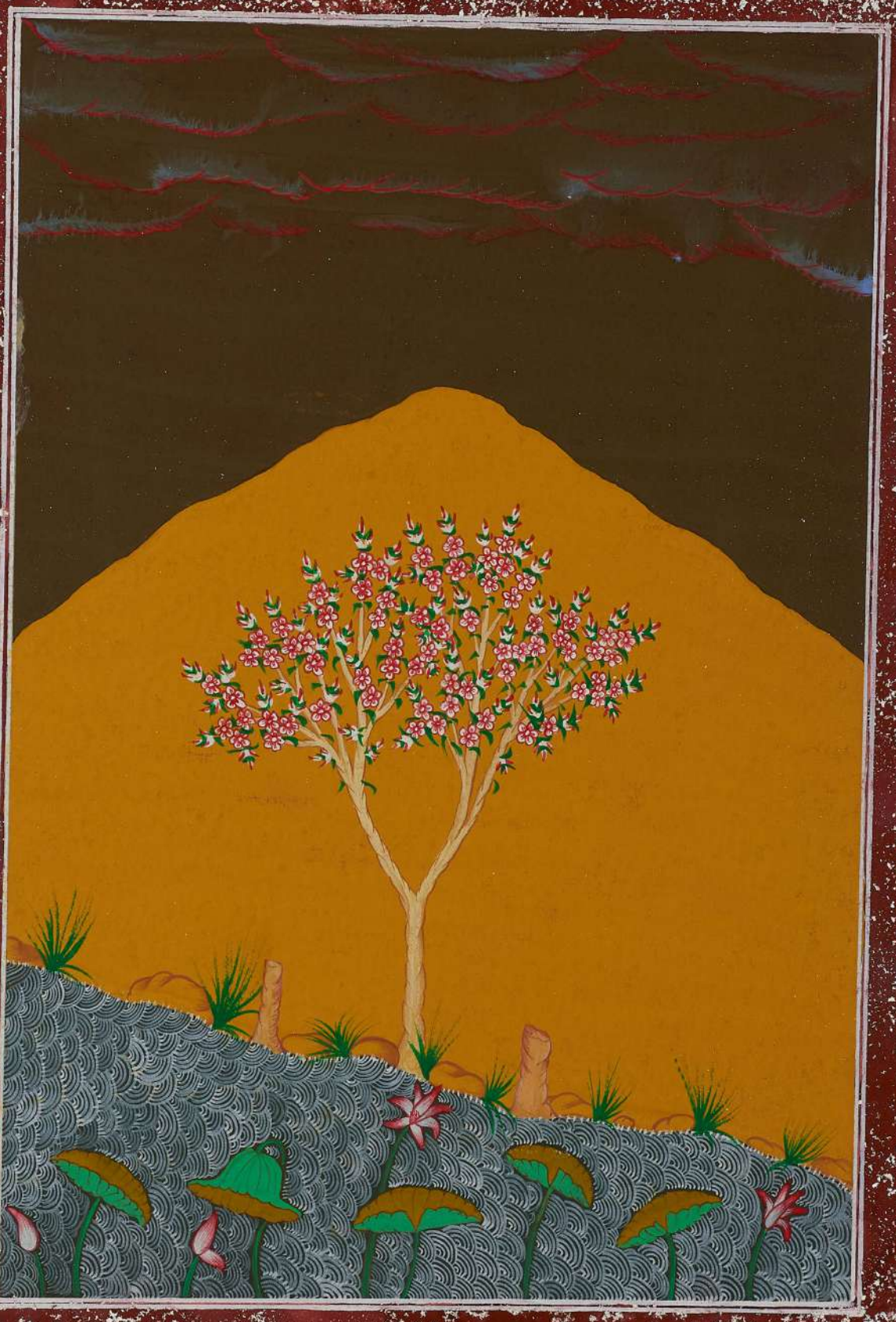


The Dreams of Life. | 2026
Gouache on Handmade Paper
13 inches x 10 inches | INR 1,50,000





Without your Support | 2026
Gouache, Silver leaf on Handmade paper
13 inches x 10 inches | INR 1,75,000 each





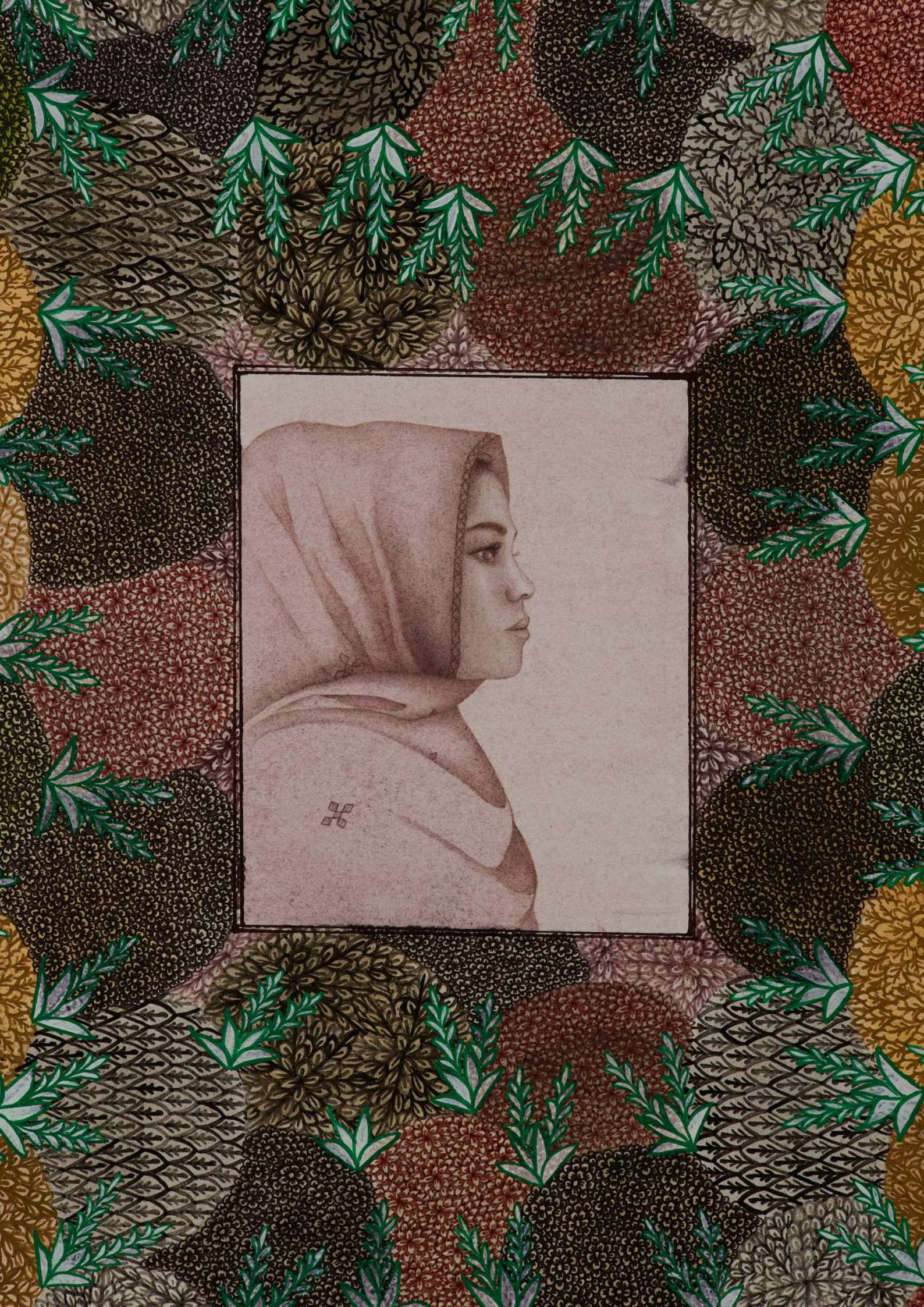


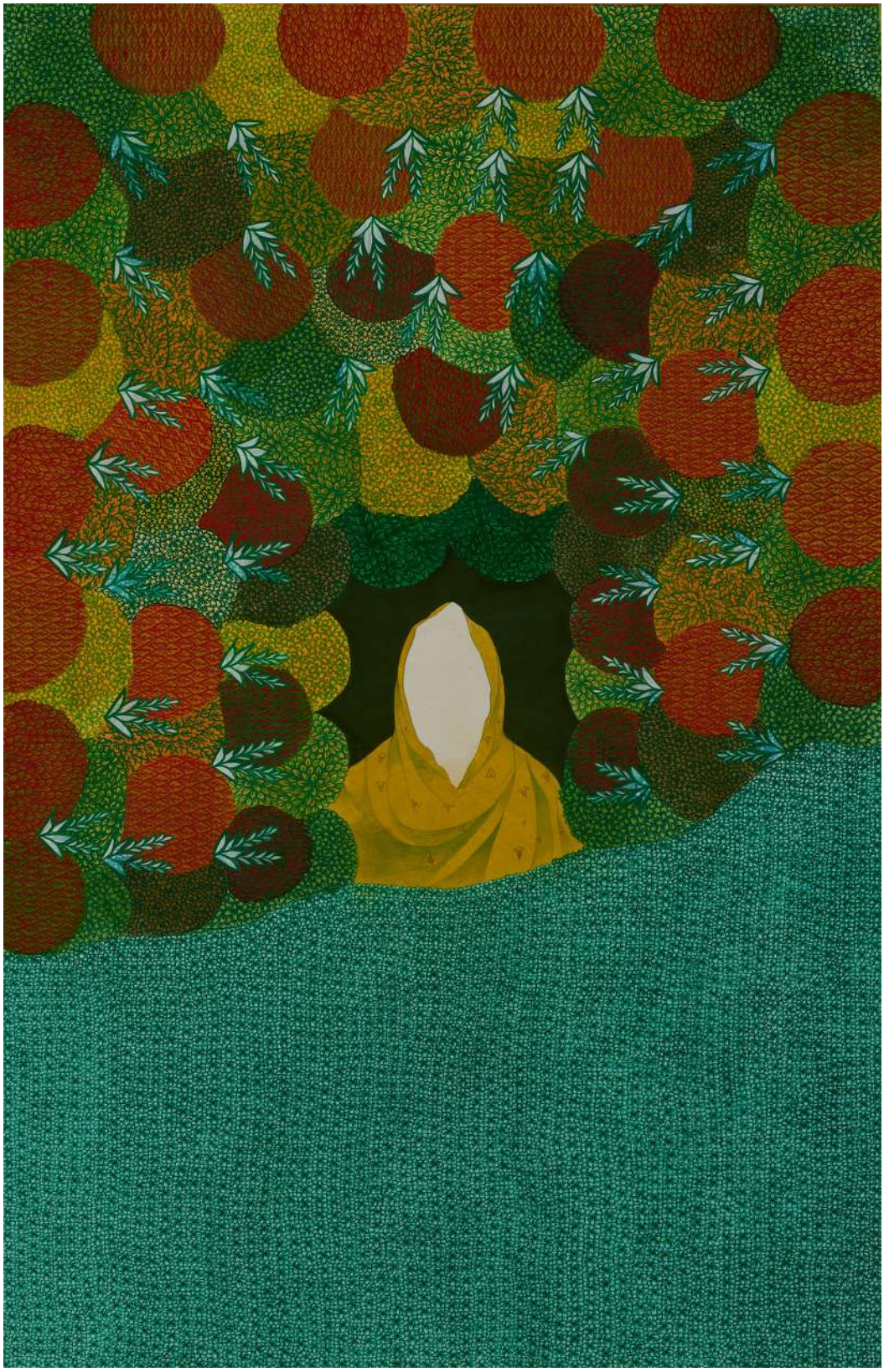
My Loved Ones | 2026
Gouache on Handmade Paper
21 inches x 13 inches | INR 3,00,000





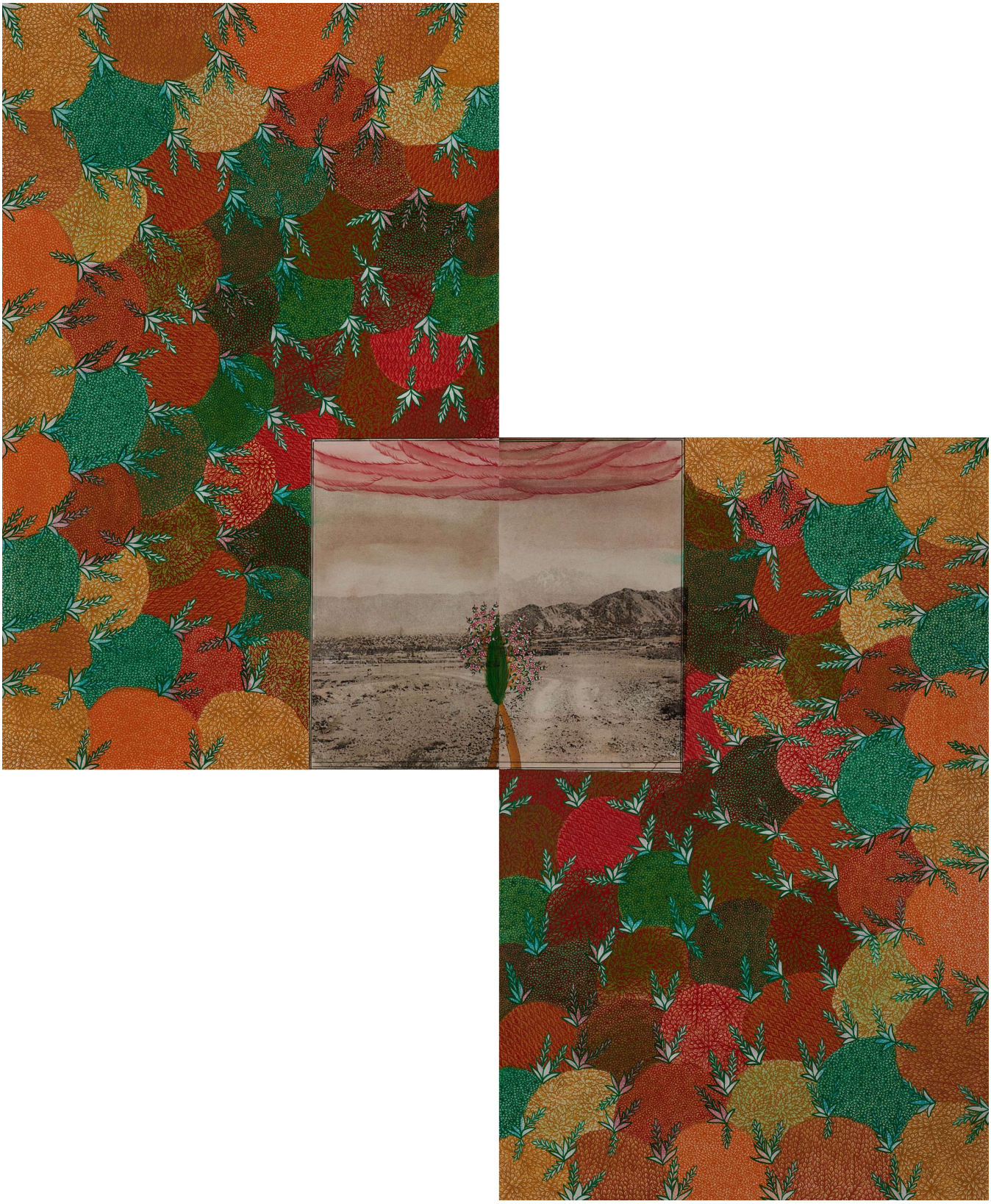
My Loved Ones | 2026
Gouache on Handmade Paper
21 inches x 13 inches | INR 3,00,000





My Loved Ones | 2026
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21 inches x 13 inches | INR 3,00,000





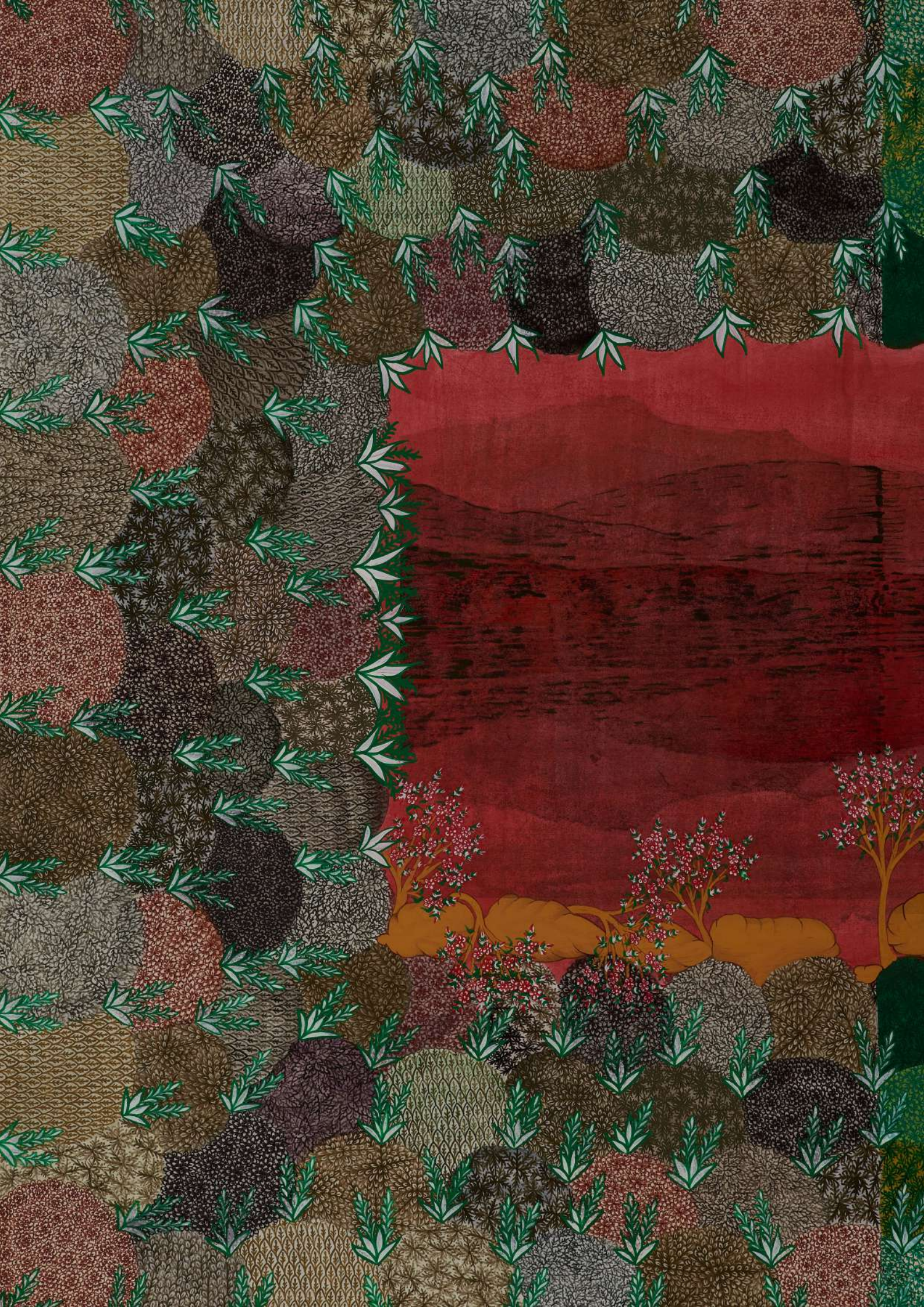
In you, For you, With you. | 2026
Gouache, Phototransfer on Handmade paper
27 inches x 21 inches | INR 4,00,000







Their Hearts So Tired... | 2026
Gouache, Phototransfer on Handmade paper
21 inches x 27 inches | INR 4,00,000

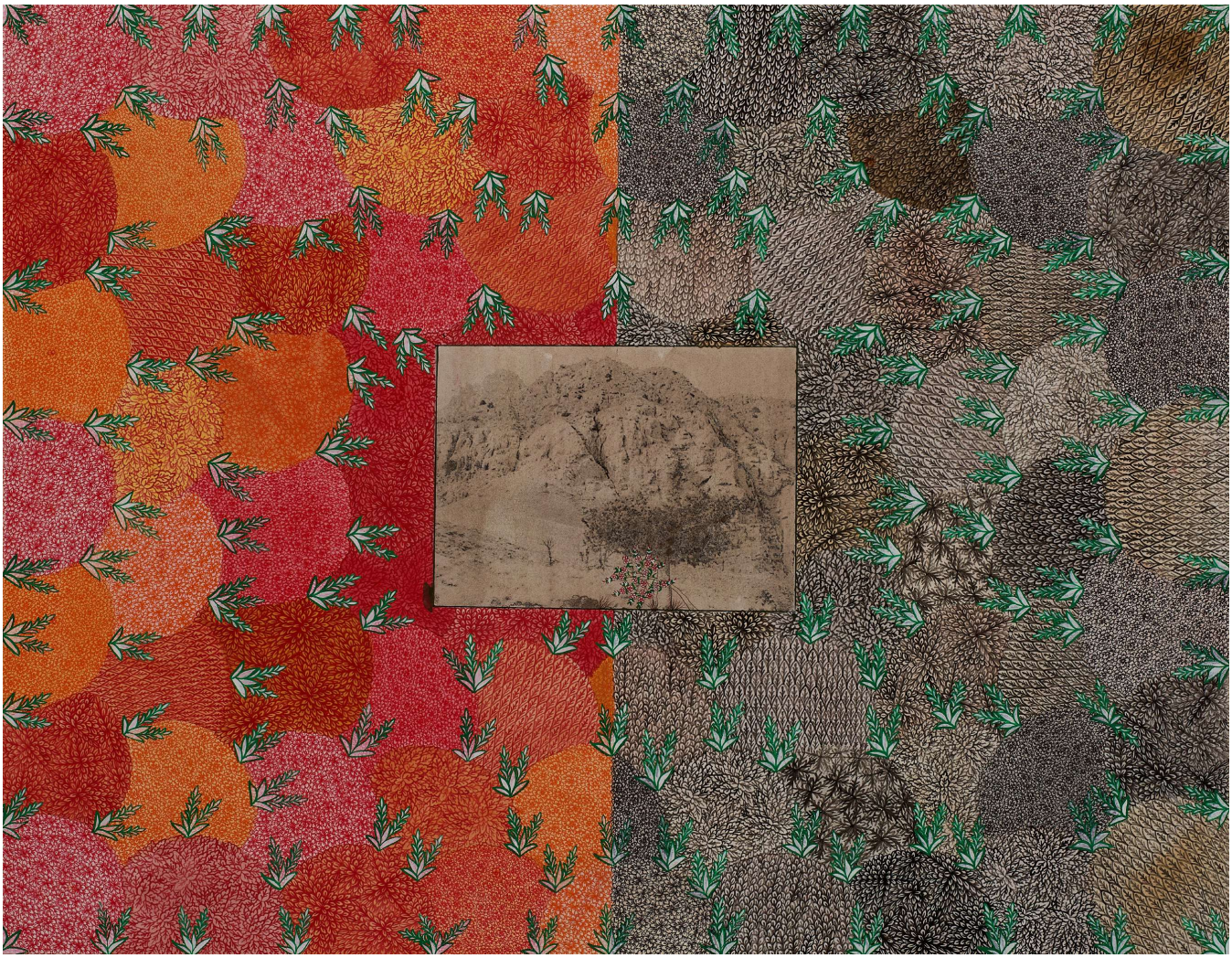






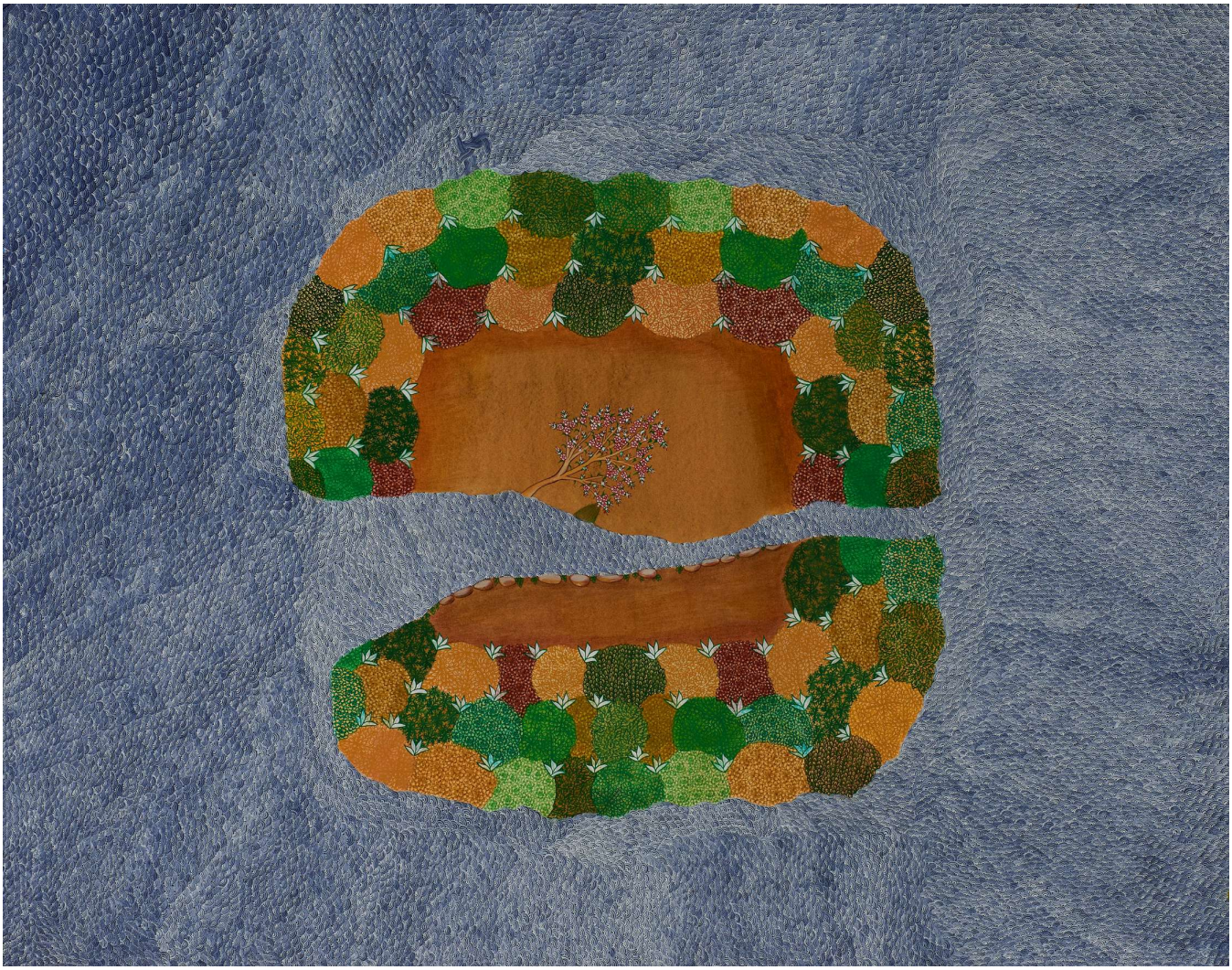
Desert | 2026
Gouache, Ink on Handmade paper
21 inches x 27 inches | INR 4,00,000





Between Two Places | 2026
Gouache, Ink on Handmade paper
21 inches x 27 inches | INR 4,00,000





My Paradise | 2025
Gouache on Handmade Paper
21 inches x 27 inches | INR 4,00,000





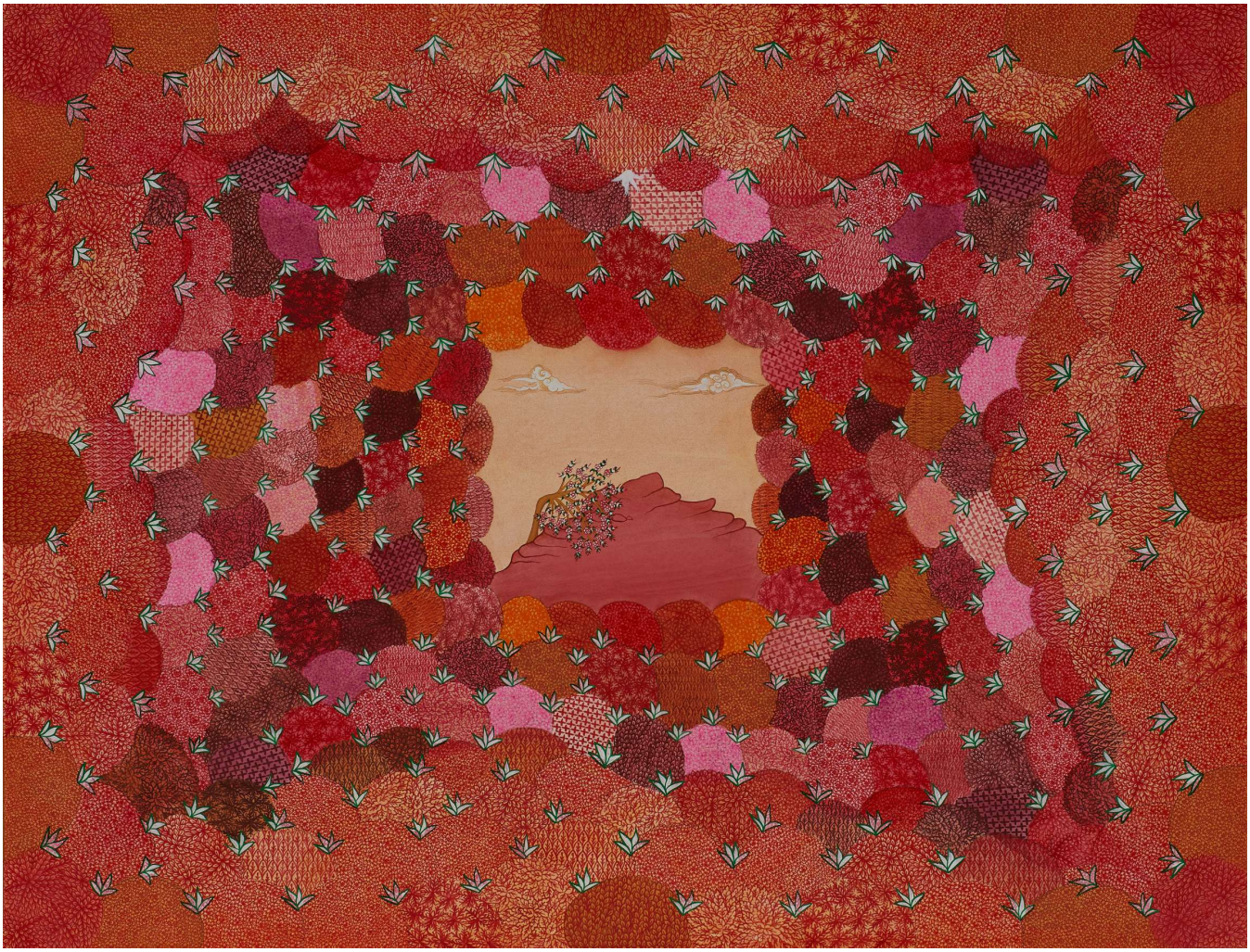
In the Air Without you | 2025
Gouache, Silver leaf on Handmade paper
27 inches x 21 inches | INR 4,00,000





This World Cannot Break You. | 2026
Gouache on Handmade paper
21 inches x 27 inches | INR 4,25,000





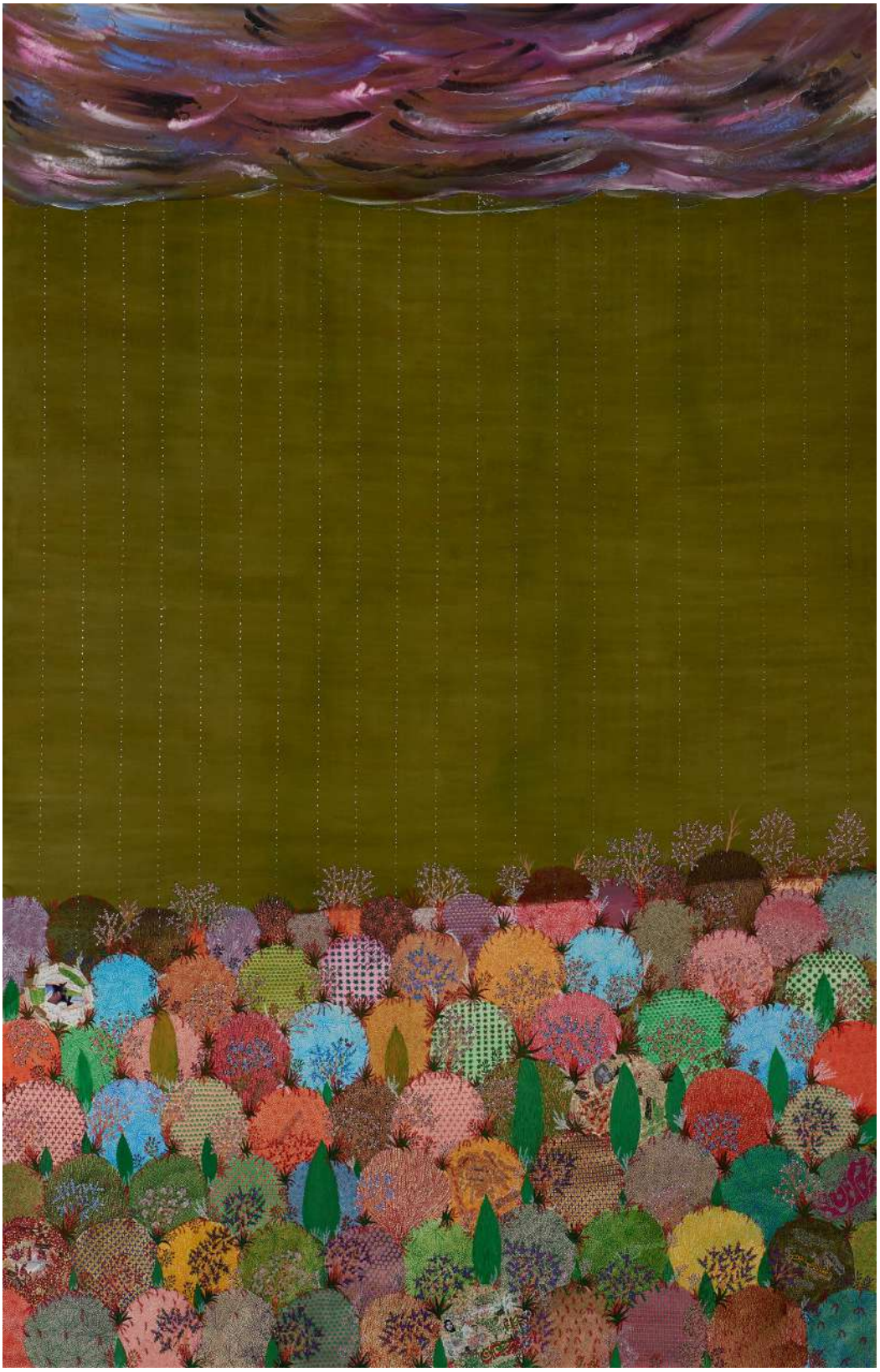
I Found Myself | 2026
Gouache on Handmade paper
21 inches x 27 inches | INR 4,25,000



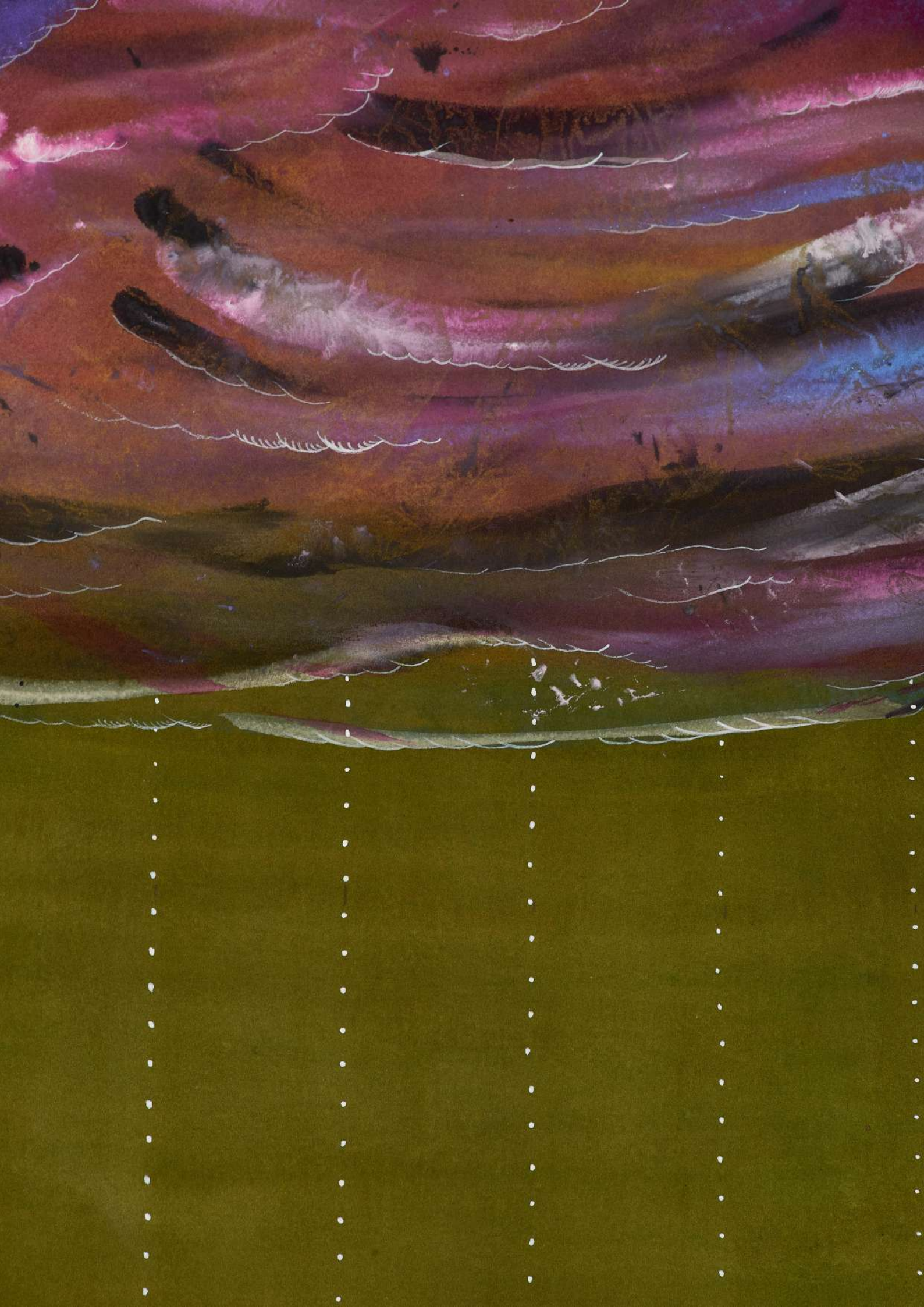


But I'm Still Here, Aren't I? | 2026
Gouache, Ink on Handmade paper
30 inches x 40 inches | INR 5,00,000





Khourshid Fruits, Mixed Fruits. | 2023
Gouache, Ink, Newspaper on Arches paper
70 inches x 44 inches | INR 8,00,000



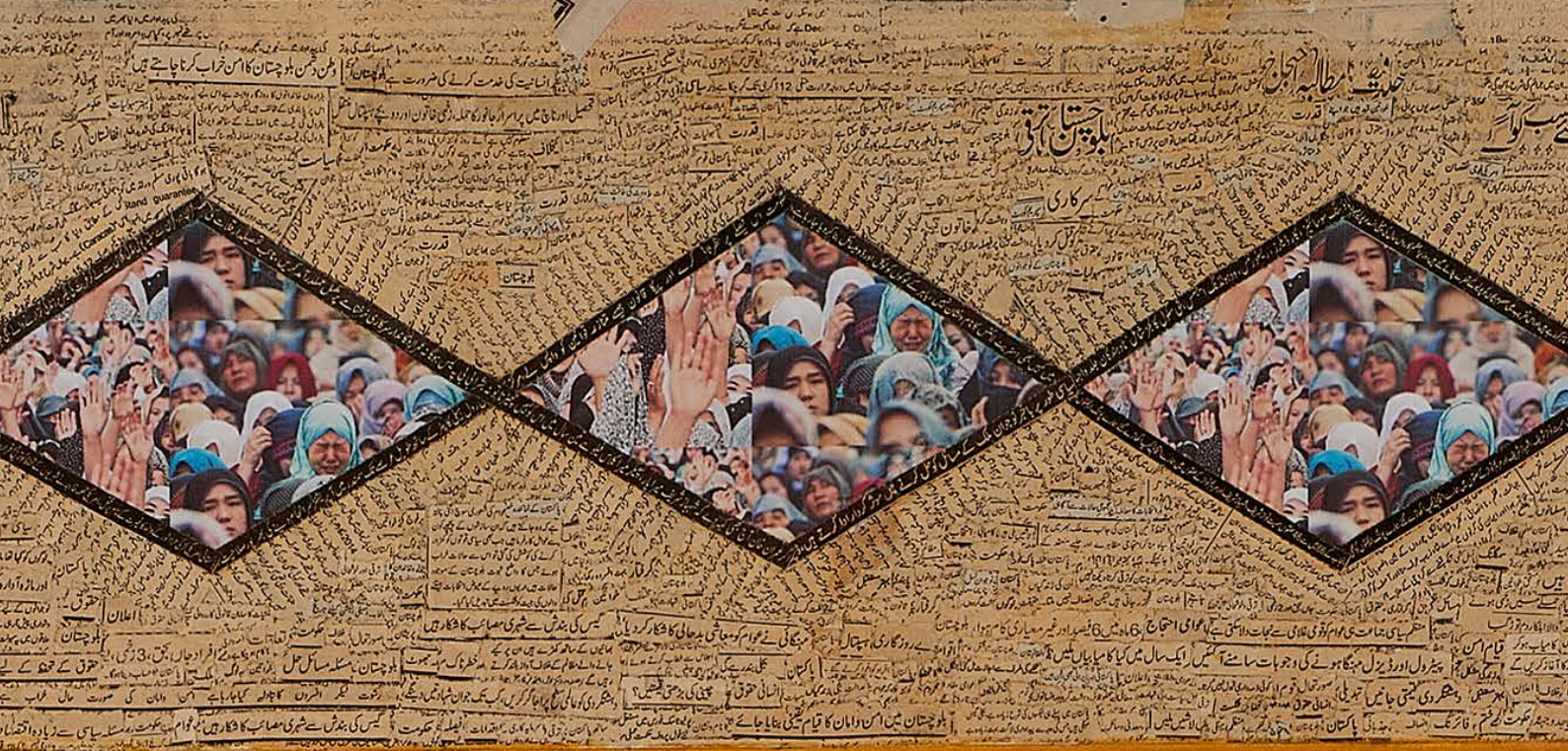


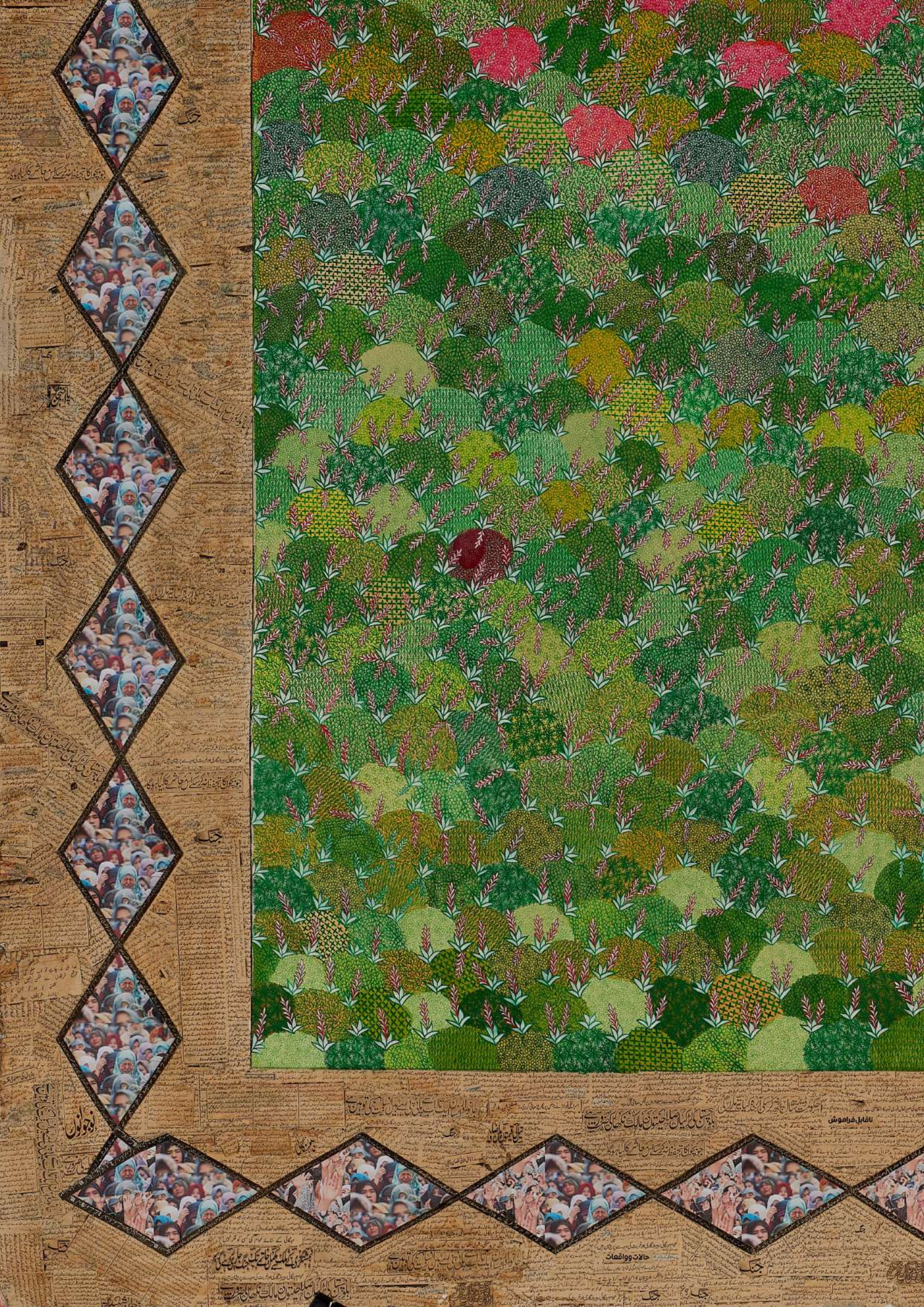




I Am The Falcon Of The Mountain. | 2026
Gouache, Newspaper on Arches pap
8 feet x 5 feet | INR 11,50,000

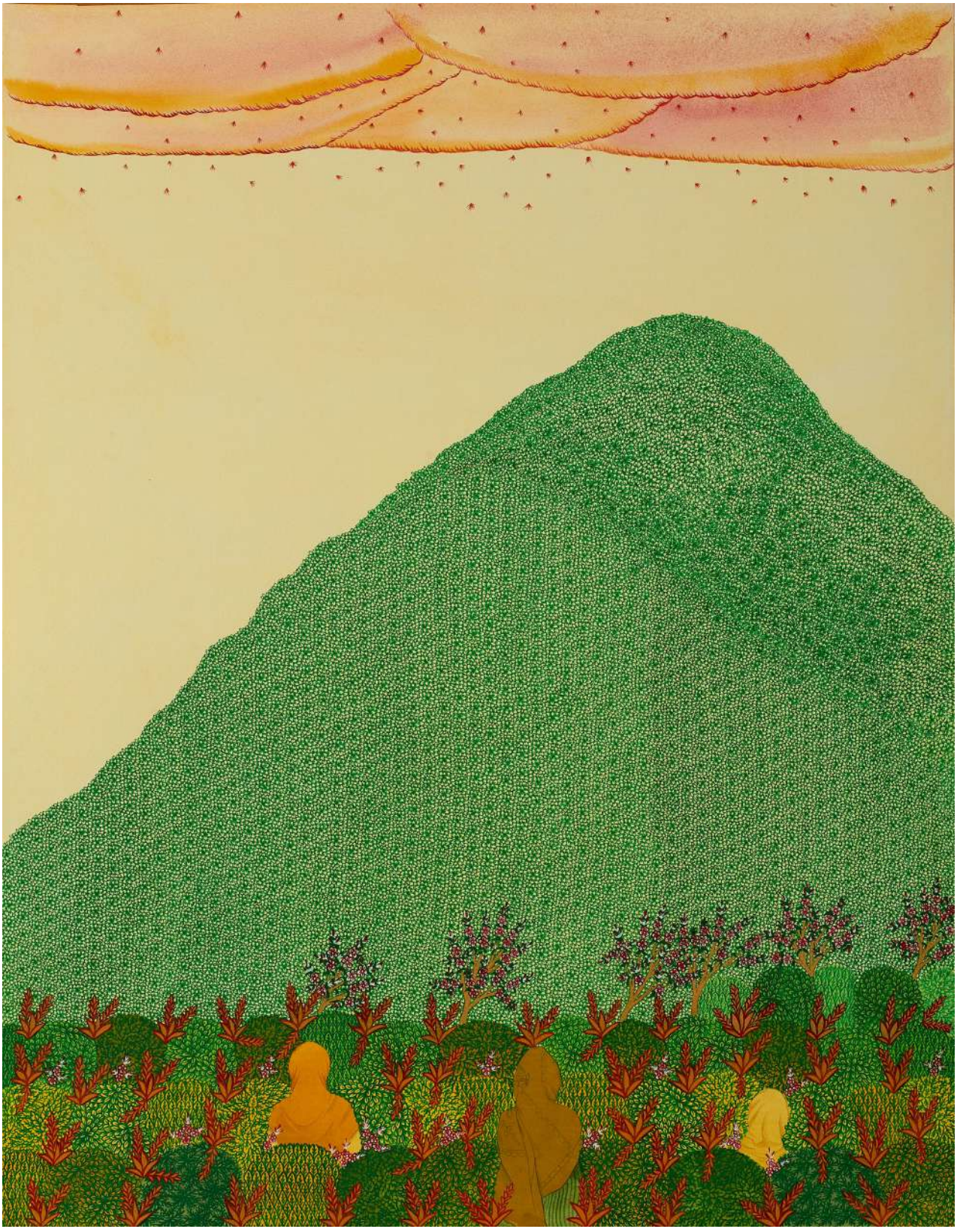




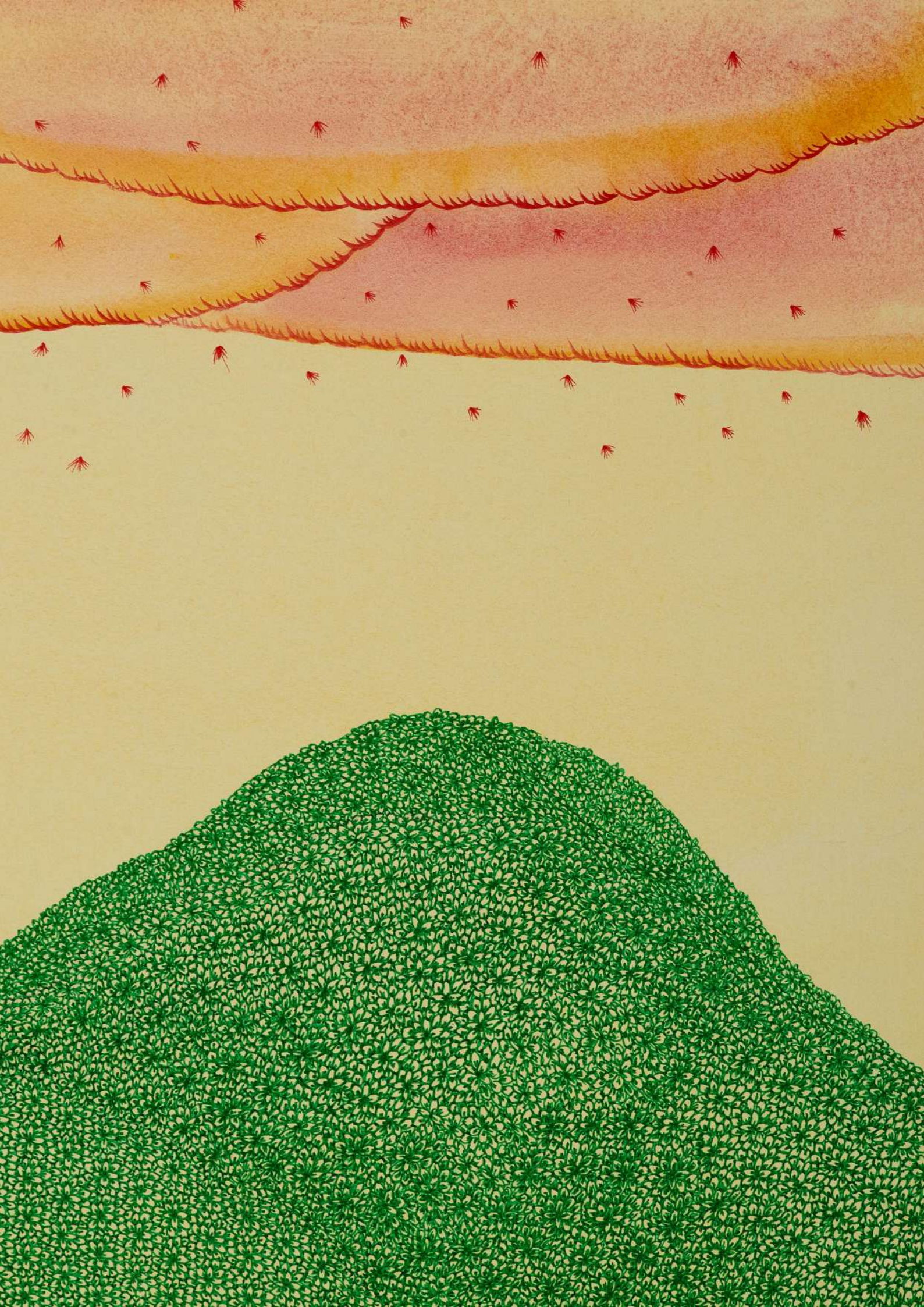








Waiting For You 2 | 2026
Gouache, ink on Handmade paper
27 inches x 21 inches | INR 3,50,000







Women, Life, Freedom | 2026
Gouache, Newspaper, Hair on arches paper
8 feet x 5 feet | INR 11,50,000






بلوچستان میں امن وامان کا قیام یقینی بنایا جائے
قانون
12 افراد کو اغوا کر لیا

About Pristine Contemporary:

Pristine Contemporary was founded in New Delhi in 2024 by collectors Arjun Butani and Arjun Sawhney as a platform dedicated to rigorous contemporary artistic practice across South Asia and beyond. Working with emerging and mid-career artists, the gallery supports practices that engage critically with the cultural, social, and material conditions of the present, alongside a sustained commitment to each artist's long-term career development.

Beyond its commercial role, Pristine Contemporary acts as an active interlocutor in the cultural landscape, offering curatorial collaboration, mentorship, institutional advocacy, and strategic placement within major private and public collections, working closely with curators, museums, residencies, foundations, and academic institutions.

Located in Kotla, Defence Colony, the gallery occupies a former timber mill, its soaring ceilings and exposed concrete beams lending a restrained architectural character suited to contemplation and dialogue with the work on view.
The gallery's programme spans artists from across South Asia and beyond, including Varad Bang, Ayuesh Agarwal, Kumari Nahappan, Saskia Pintelon, and Feroza Hakeem, among others.

Through exhibitions, publications, and participation in leading fairs such as Art Mumbai and India Art Fair, Pristine Contemporary contributes to the expanding discourse on contemporary art in the region while building an increasingly international programme.

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