



# Exhibition Guide



## Madiha Aijaz *Memorial for the lost pages*

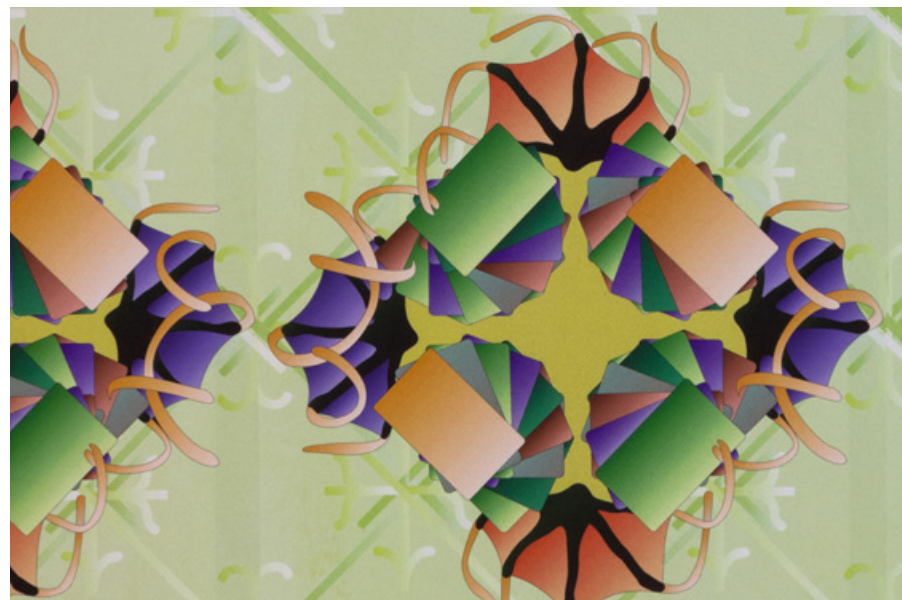
July 24, 2020 – January 3, 2021  
Alvin Balkind Gallery and off-site at  
Yaletown-Roundhouse Station

*Memorial for the lost pages* presents the intimate videos and photographs of Madiha Aijaz, bringing together the artist's works in Canada for the first time. Aijaz was based in Karachi, Pakistan, and her work is as complex and layered as the city in which she lived, addressing issues of language and identity, longing and loss, public space and colonial legacies. Her videos explore Karachi's historic and mostly deserted public libraries. Alongside these works are a series of photographs that examine tensions between awaking desire and admissible sexuality in, as Aijaz described, "contested, often fractured landscapes." Off-site at Yaletown-Roundhouse station, another photographic series describes the country's most famous rail line, the Khyber Mail. Together, Aijaz's photographs and videos call attention to shared spaces that are seemingly peripheral to contemporary life. They languish from a neglect that threatens their continued existence. Yet, as the artist's steadfast and often tender camerawork suggests, these spaces persist.

Madiha Aijaz, *Death sentence in two languages* (detail), 2016



# Exhibition Guide



## Julian Yi-Jong Hou *Grass Drama*

July 24, 2020 – January 3, 2021  
CAG Façade

Julian Hou's practice is expansive and roving. He draws from a rich field of influences: contemporary psychedelia and diverse spiritual traditions, various musical and architectural vernaculars, Orientalist motifs, along with deep memories (and misrememberings) from his own diasporic childhood. *Grass Drama*, Hou's first solo exhibition in a major public gallery, manifests as a vinyl record, a one-night performance and a suite of printed patterns hung in the gallery's façade. Developed out of a two-year sensitivity training undertaken by Hou, involving practices from divination to expanded states of consciousness, *Grass Drama's* creation was foretold by a Thoth tarot card reading and informs its narrative structure. These cards share a history with Chinese playing cards and early 20th-century Western spiritual philosophy, Hermetic Thelemism, which in turn has connections to Buddhism. In *Grass Drama*, Hou both connects and proposes a means of bridging discontinuities while considering notions of site, context, politics, history and personal references. The works ask those who experience them to discard conventional, waking logic and allow affinities between unlikely things to find one another.

Julian Yi-Jong Hou, *Crux Pattern* (detail), 2019



# Exhibition Guide



## Althea Thauberger *Pagal Pagal Pagal Pagal Filmy Duniya*

July 24, 2020 – January 3, 2021  
B.C. Binning Gallery

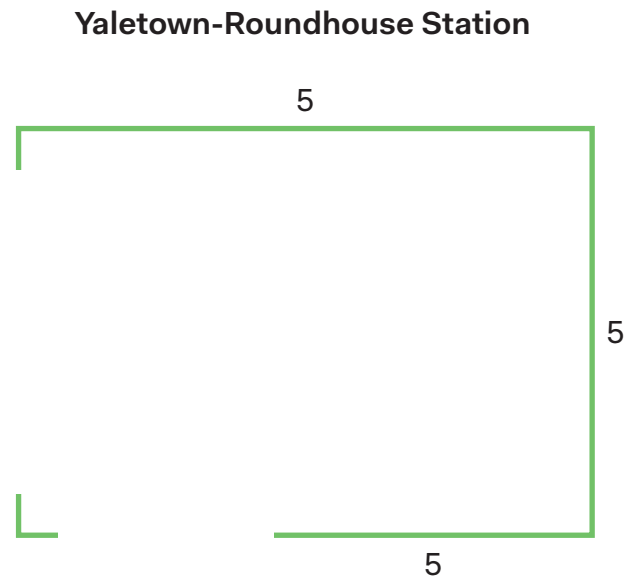
The Capri Theatre of Karachi, Pakistan is the site and subject of Althea Thauberger's video work, *Pagal Pagal Pagal Pagal Filmy Duniya* [*Mad Mad Mad Mad Filmy World*] (2017). Thauberger recognized a complex knot of histories, social relations and power dynamics in the Capri. Built in 1968, the theatre embodied Pakistan's "golden age" of cinema, and through the late 1970s and 1980s, withstood religious and political shifts decrying the "deviance" of the movies. Today, with an accessible 200-rupee ticket price in the lower seats, the theatre remains open to almost anyone who desires to see a film. Thauberger's methodology involves developing projects through a process of engagement with the communities of her chosen sites. For *Pagal*, she worked collaboratively and experimentally with a large group of participant-actors who shaped the film for themselves, imaginatively describing a world in the cinema, created by the unruly, heterogenous group of people that make up its audience. *Pagal* asks us to think differently about the complexity of space and invites us to consider the tenuousness of any community.

Althea Thauberger, *Pagal Pagal Pagal Pagal Filmy Duniya* (video still), 2017

## Madiha Aijaz

- 1 *These Silences Are All the Words*, 2018  
single-channel video with sound  
14:53
  - 2 *Death sentence in two languages*, 2016  
archival inkjet prints on Legacy Fibre paper  
10 x 15 inches each
  - 3 *Brown Sahab and the Pomeranian*, 2017  
single-channel video with sound  
01:50
  - 4 *Memorial for the lost pages*, 2018  
single-channel video with sound  
03:22
- Off-site at Yaletown-Roundhouse Station
- 5 *A Railway Pilgrimage in Pakistan*, 2014  
photographs printed on vinyl  
40 x 60 inches each

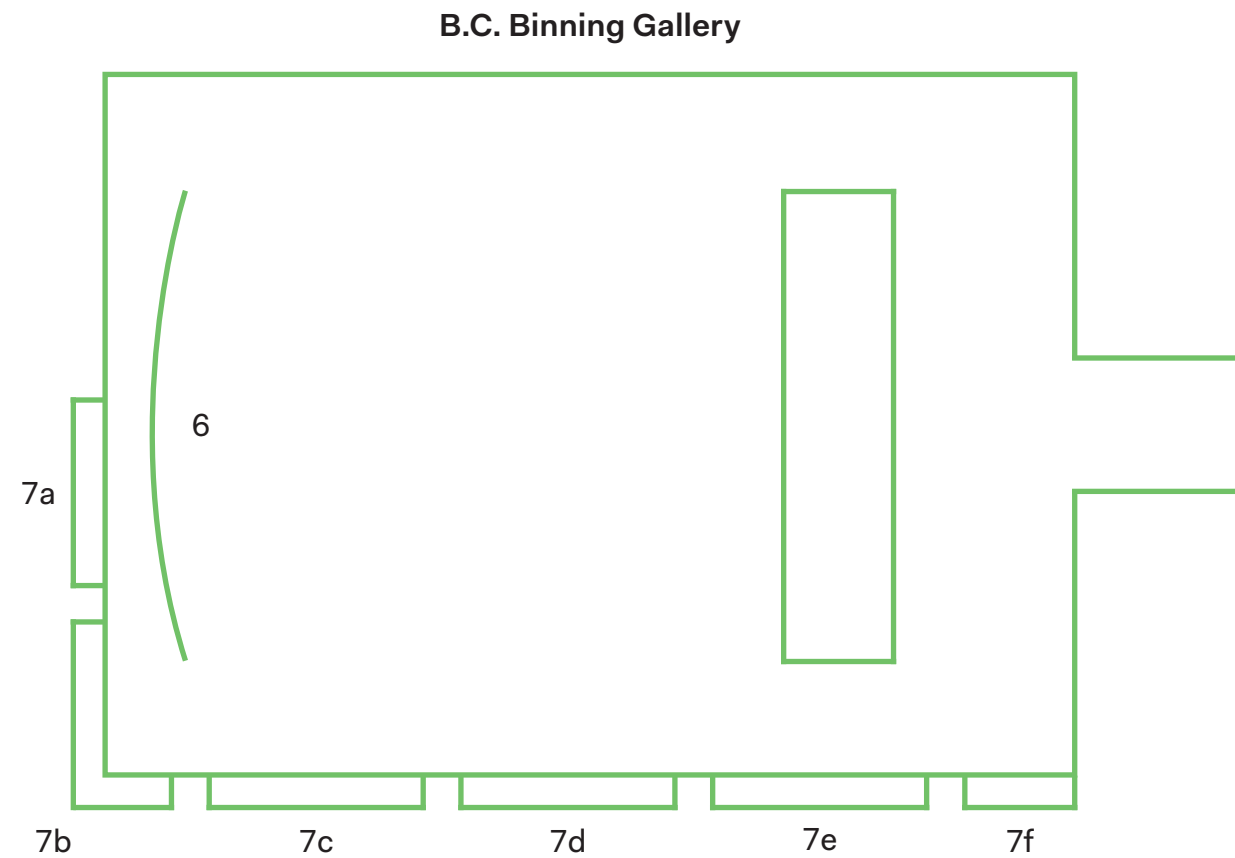
This project arose from a collaboration Madiha Aijaz embarked on with the late Pakistani writer Annie Ali Khan to describe the country's most rail line, the Khyber Mail. The Khyber Mail was called the Frontier Mail during the 19th century British colonial rule.



## Althea Thauberger

- 6 *Pagal Pagal Pagal Pagal Filmy Duniya [Mad Mad Mad Mad Filmy World]*, 2017  
single-channel video with sound  
30:01

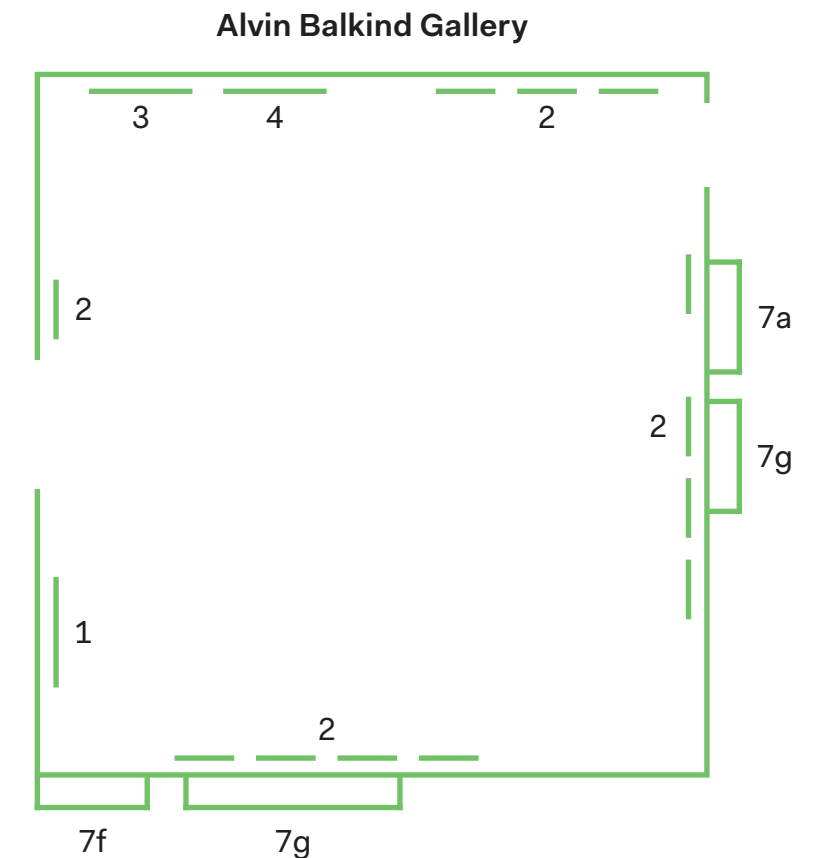
The Capri Theatre was designed and built in 1968 by Pakistani architects Rizki & Co. under the guidance of owner, Chaudry Abdul Razaque. Its open-plan, modernist architecture features a curved screen and zero-angle projection. The installation in the B.C. Binning Gallery likewise features a curved screen and zero-angle projection, echoing the auditorium in the Capri.



## Julian Yi-Jong Hou

- 7a *Psychic entablature #1*, 2018
- 7b *Psychic entablature #2*, 2018
- 7c *Hypnagogic tectonic*, 2018
- 7d *Twin Saxes Entwined*, 2020
- 7e *Grass Drama*, 2020
- 7f *Repatriation*, 2020
- 7g *Crux*, 2020

CrystalPoint prints on paper  
Dimensions variable



The origin of Tarot cards is linked to Chinese playing cards. For Hou, whose own family history has roots in Zen Buddhism, this connection is significant—with *Grass Drama*, he sought to draw parallels between the different spiritual histories and trajectories of Buddhism and Hermetic Thelemism.

*Grass Drama* also experiments with the recorded album as an art form, with the possibility of pattern as metaphor for narrative mode, and with the evocation of affective states through the experience of performance. The recorded portion of this project will be launched as a vinyl record on September 16, available for listening and purchase in the CAG Lobby.