

Development Of Contemporary Textile Art Inspired By The Arial View Of Historical Sites And Population Transitions Of Bahawalpur

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Abstract

The Cholistan Desert, covering 26,933 Sq km, is a region with significant cultural assets including the ancient Rohi people's folklore, poetry, handicrafts, dances and myths. The area, known as "Deep/Greater Cholistan," is accessible only through dirt tracks and sand dunes. M. Rafique Mughal identified 410 extant sites in the desert, with 370 in the present-day district of Bahawalpur. These sites date back to the Hakra Ware period, Early Harappan, Mature Harappan, and Late Harappan periods. The Hakra civilization's remains, believed to be associated with ghosts and the dead, have special significance, more so than the Indus Valley. The current study is inspired from the architectural legacy and population transitions around historical places of princely state of Bahawalpur. The Ariel view of the¹ city serves as the basic inspiration for designing compositions. While the art and craft of this specific region provide the detail and confinement in the execution and development phases. Like rice stitch is mainly used with the combination of knots and couching where needed, to add details. Whereas, historically developed technique stippling is used to make sketches. Based on these techniques final products are shown in three different ways i.e. Installation, apparel, art piece. Fabric slabs are the integral part of the research design. Embroidered fabric slabs collectively composed of Ariel view legends made installation. For table top art piece 7 fabric slabs combine to showcase 7 decades population transition around Derawar fort. Design compositions of these seven fabric slabs depict two important facts. With passage of time, population and facilities are increasing around the fort but the fort is demolishing and losing its glory. In the category of apparel, the researchers have designed four shawls based on these compositions blending artistic creativity with practical textile applications. The researchers' conclusion with some suggestions and recommendations was also summed up at the end of this study.

Keywords: Development, Contemporary Textile Art, Inspired, Arial View.

1. Introduction

South Punjab, in particular, the districts of Multan and Bahawalpur which were recently mapped under the aegis of UNESCO-Islamabad, have a vast range of cultural assets. The living culture of the communities carries influences of the inherited ancient civilizations and historical past which flourished in this region and has permeated their present day culture and its expressions. Cultural zones within these two districts are discernable which have infused the living culture of communities influencing their lifestyles, value system and world view; giving

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the South Punjab region a distinct cultural identity reinforced through their shared language, Saraiki. The earliest, dating back to 3800 BCE, is that of the Cholistan desert, the Rohi made famous by the region's premier Sufi Saint Khawaja Ghulam Fareed. Although the built assets are contained within the desert yet its intangible expressions of poetry and oral narratives, song and dance is embedded within the culture of the region, in particular Bahawalpur. The influences of the material culture of the ancient people of the Hakra Valley Civilization can still be found in the pottery making traditions and in the motifs and designs which continue to be used. The other identifiable culture ethos permeating the living culture of the region is that engendered by the advent of the Sufi saints in the 10th century onwards. The Sufi philosophical and material culture emanated from the ancient cities of Multan and Uch Sharif, the central abode of mystical Islam in the region, which had far reaching impact on the whole of South Punjab and further into Sind and Northern India. The erstwhile Bahawalpur State (1802-1955 CE) has also had deep influence on the culture of the district and the built form engendered during the State period has left an indelible mark on the built environment of the entire area, most prominent in its capital city, Bahawalpur and the twin capital Dera Nawab Sahib. The long history of the region can be traced from the Hakra River Civilization (3800-1500 BCE) till the present day.

The current study is inspired from the researchers' hometown Bahawalpur for its legacy, architecture, people, city dynamics and evolution of population with time. It is the first state which joined Pakistan after partition (Gillani, n.d.). Bahawalpur was a princely State (1727-1947) established by Abbasies. They ruled over this State for more than 200 years. After the fall of Baghdad (1258) the Abbasids migrated to Egypt and then to Sindh. They have been gifted the region of "Chudhary" by Nawab of Multan Hayatullah Tareen on the recommendation of Gilani and Bukhari priests of Uch. In this way the state of Bahawalpur came into being and later on it was considered as one of the richest state. There were 12 different rulers called as Nawab in Bahawalpur served the Bahawalpur state successfully for more than 220 years. This state has its own heritage and rich culture. The people of the state were very simple, brave, courageous, good hosts and very co-operative. The rulers of Bahawalpur State tried their level best to give maximum facilities to the peoples of the state. They have the opinion that if the peoples of the state will be given basic necessities and justice, the state will flourish more and more and will be considered as welfare state.

Along with facilitating their people the rulers also developed an impressive architectural legacy, from the first simple residential palace Chau Dari, to the foundations of the town of Allahabad. As the state grew, so too did its architecture, with the buildings of forts, palaces, and mosques. Later, when the city of Bahawalpur emerged as the Abbasids' new royal capital, it became the heart of Abbasid Architecture in India. In fact, Ameers of Bahawalpur did not confine themselves to building within their own territory. They even commissioned the constructions of a number of ribats (inns) in Saudi Arabia for Hajj pilgrims en route to Makkah. Most of their buildings were designed to meet defensive, residential, religious, or public needs. The Abbasid Ameers also rebuilt and renovated a number of ancient monuments belonging both to the pre-Muslim and mediaeval Muslim periods, the latter including the shrines of the Bukhari saints and their mosques at Uch (Rizvi, n.d.). They also built palaces and forts in their territory. Darbar mehal, Gulzar mehal, Noor mehal, Sadiq Garh palace, Drawer fort and fort Manru are some of the famous one.

The desert area of former Princely State of Bahawalpur is known as Cholistan or Rohi. It was a part of Great Indian Desert Rajasthan. The Cholistan part of Bahawalpur state covered 2/3 land of the State. Like the other part of Rajasthan desert, it was also, once a thickly populated area with flowing rivers and green fields. Its people were prosperous and well mannered. It was the central place of Indus valley civilization as it revealed by discovering many sites in the area. After the dryness of rivers and conversion the area into desert a large number of populations migrated to other areas. But the remaining population decided to face the harshness of desert life and adjusted their way of life according to the atmosphere. Indeed they were civilized and had traditional way of life (Hussain et al., n.d.). For my designs and compositions these architectures and transitions of population around them, serve as the basic inspiration. As the design and art is inspired from this state then why not its execution. As, mentioned earlier that it's a state that is rich in culture, craft, handicrafts,

embroideries, dying etc. Rice stitch is an embroidery technique originated in this area. I am combining these two distinctive aspects as a base of my research work. My compositions and designs are made and executed completely focusing on them. Therefore, following are the research questions for this study.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the current study were:

- 1:** To exhibit compositions based on population transitions through stippling.
- 2:** To exhibit the compositions based on Population transitions through rice stitch technique.

1.2 Research Questions of the Study

The current study answered the following questions:

RQ1: How does stippling is a right technique to exhibit compositions based on population transitions?

RQ2: How does the rice stitch technique exhibit the compositions based on Population transitions?

1.3 Significance of the Study

Textile art is one of the oldest forms of art in human civilization. At its inception, it was not focused on looks but for practical purposes—such as clothing or blankets to keep warm. This study may be helpful for the university teachers in Pakistan.

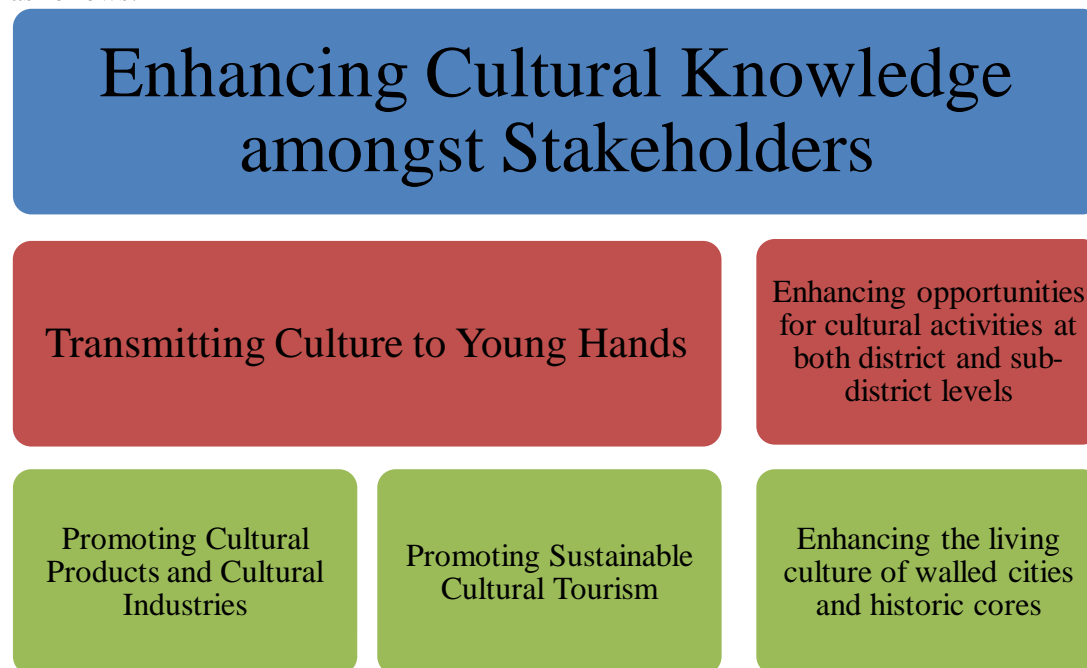
2. Literature Review

2.1 The Influences of the Imperial State of Bahawalpur

The Daudpotra tribe of Shikarpur, Sind, established the State of Bahawalpur to establish a political identity after the collapse of the Mughal Empire. They settled in the Cholistan desert and expanded along the Sutlej, becoming a state (riyasat) with the Sikh Maharaja. The capital was Bahawalpur, named after Bahawal Khan I. The state covered present-day districts of Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, and Rahim Yar Khan. The Modern State of Bahawalpur was founded in 1802 during the decline of the Durrani Empire, with Muhammad Bahawal Khan II as the Nawab. The Abbassis clan, known as the Abbassis, ruled Bahawalpur for over 250 years, promoting their professed Arab identity through measures like naming the capital city Baghdadul-Jadeed and promoting Arabic language and courtly practices. The family's Muslim identity leaned towards the Ottoman Caliphate, reinforcing this through various means. The first series of stamps issued in 1945 were in Arabic and English script, indicating the two important links of the royal family. The state's survival depended on good relations with the British colonialists, which were reaffirmed throughout the colonization of the Punjab. The Nawabs also engendered a courtly lifestyle with trappings of royalty, setting them apart from the common person. The local language Saraiki and its State variation, Riyasti, united the Saraiki communities, rulers, and the rulers of the Abadkhars and Daudpotra clan. The shared respect for Sufi scholars and poet-philosopher Khawaja Ghulam Fareed, who was elevated as the spiritual guide of the Nawabs, was another unifying factor. The state supported the arts, mainly in literary and devotional music. However, Bahawalpur did not have a specific school of painting or music gharana, and the craft ornamentation of palaces, mosques, and royal edifices was reputed to be done by Multan artisans. Bahawalpur developed a distinctive style of architecture, but no building ornamentation craft guilds developed in the state. Bahawalpur excelled in textile crafts due to the use of local craftsmanship by royal household women. They dressed in a fashion inspired by local dress traditions, using gota work to decorate their clothing. Hand-woven cloth, fine silks, cotton lungis, chaddars, salaras, sussi, and muslin cloth became important handmade products. Other crafts, such as chunri making and katcha tanka, were also patronized. These traditional craft villages, found throughout the region, are the repository of a rich craft tradition inherited and influenced by political and social developments. The adult community participates in the craft making process, earning a substantial livelihood. However, these villages have not been recognized as cultural entities, resulting in a rich legacy under threat.

2.2 Safeguarding the Cultural Heritage of Communities of South Punjab

The UNESCO-Norway funded Project "Mapping of Cultural Assets in Districts Multan and Bahawalpur" and later extended to district Vehari has identified 130 and 137 built assets in Bahawalpur and Multan, respectively, while 126 and 95 intangible assets were mapped. The GIS database generated will be housed at the Lok Virsa Institute of Culture and Heritage, Islamabad, to bring these into a national database. The identified Built Assets fall within distinct categories of palaces, forts, religious establishments, public institutional buildings, heritage premises/structures, and vernacular heritage buildings and adobe structures. The region's rich intangible cultural heritage includes craft making traditions, performing and literary arts, folk poetry and music, and traditional dances. The extant crafts of South Punjab include building decorative crafts, textile crafts, embroidery, khussa, hand woven products, camel bone products, earthenware pottery, paper craft, camel skin products, naqaashi and lacquered wooden boxes, lacquer work, and palm leaf and straw work products. However, many of these crafts are now driven through market demands, losing their traditional fineness and skills. Culture is a vital asset for communities, preserving both tangible and intangible assets. It enhances pride, ownership, appreciation of cultural diversity, and promotes peace and harmony. Culture can also be harnessed for economic well-being, especially at the village level. A report submitted to UNESCO suggests seven interlinked areas of intervention guided by a peoples-centered approach to safeguard cultural assets, alleviate poverty, and empower communities through culture-driven interventions. The six areas of intervention suggested are as follows:



2.3 Pen on paper

2.3.1. Stippling

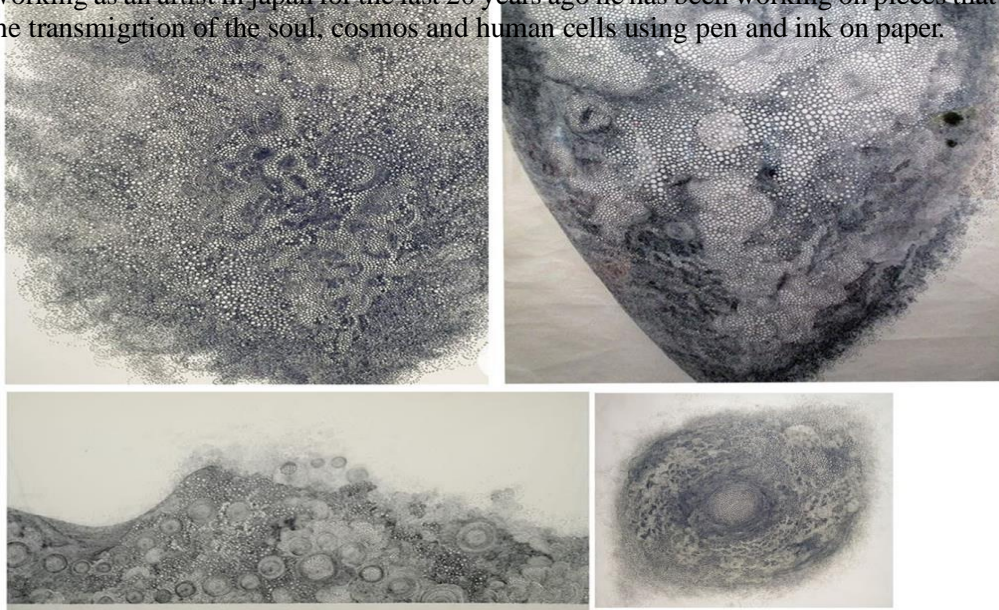
Hand-made stippling is an artistic depiction style that represents images using dots. Usually, a pen is used to deposit black ink on a white or clear paper. Although it seems to be an easy technique to master, it needs not only artistic talent but also a lot of training and much time for each individual image due to the need to place up to millions of dots. This traditional technique has many advantages: it is economic as it only relies on a single color (good for reproduction), it can represent not only tone but also shape and texture, and its dots do not impose an orientation which removes some visual artifacts. While stippling is no longer very commonly used, it can be found in some scientific domains as archeology, biology, entomology, etc., as well as in artistic drawing (Martín et al., 2015).

Stippling is an artistic style and discuss our technique for capturing and reproducing stipple features unique to an individual artist. Firstly, example stipple textures representing

various tones in order to create an approximate tone map used by the artist, are extracted. Secondly, the stipple marks and distributions from the extracted example textures, generated both a lookup table of stipple marks and a texture representing the stipple distribution. Third, it uses the distribution of stipples to synthesize similar distributions with slight variations using a numerical measure of the error between the synthesized texture and the example texture as the basis for replication (Kim et al., 2009). I have used it completely to make basis of my art work designs and compositions.

2.4 Hiroyuki Doi

Working as an artist in japan for the last 20 years ago he has been working on pieces that express the transmigrion of the soul, cosmos and human cells using pen and ink on paper.



2.5 Thread on Fabric

2.5.1 Rice Stitch

Rice Stitch is considered a 'filler stitch' so it is great for filling in areas of hand embroidery and adding great texture to your embroidery project. It is also known as the seed stitch, as it looks like little grains of rice scattered on the fabric. This simple stitch is composed of small straight stitches of equal length placed at random over the surface. It goes quickly, and there's no set pattern, so you have to try really, really hard to make a mistake. One of the things I like best about this stitch is that it is non-directional, so it looks equally good straight-on, sideways, or off-kilter. Start with single Seed Stitch, then try double Seed Stitch, it's the same thing, but with two parallel stitches in each position. It can also be seen as a base layer under the satin stitch to give a little more "poof." Typically, rice stitches are stitched in all different directions, making a random pattern.

Stippling in art is marking the canvas with dots. The dots can be used to convey the whole picture, to shade areas, to decorate edges – it just depends on what the artist wants to do with dots. In embroidery, we can achieve an effect similar to stippling by using tiny seed

stitches. We can vary the density of the seed stitching from very dense to barely speckled, to produce a sense of color gradation or shading. That is why I selected rice stitch as it can give detail I need in my work.

2.5.2 Sabatina Leccia

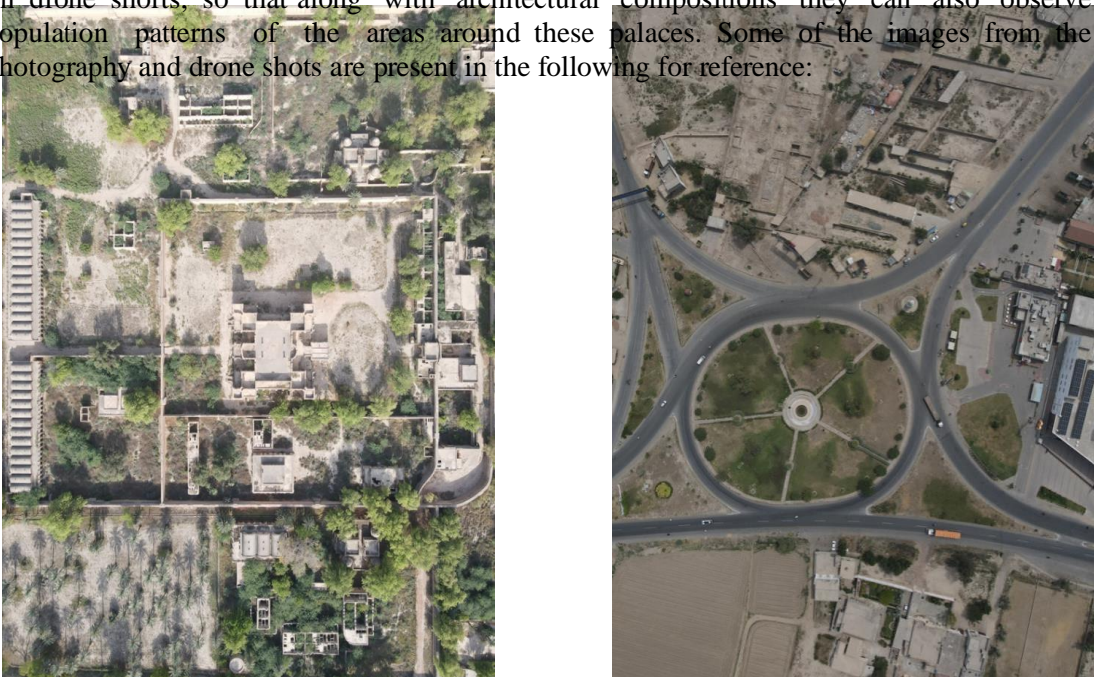
In 2012, she graduated from the MA Material Futures at Central Saint Martin's School of Art and Design, London. There, she began to develop experimental embroidery. Before setting up her workshop in Montreuil, she worked as an embroiderer for Haute Couture. In 2015, she began to exhibit these first embroidered paintings at the Amélie de Borchgrave gallery in Brussels.

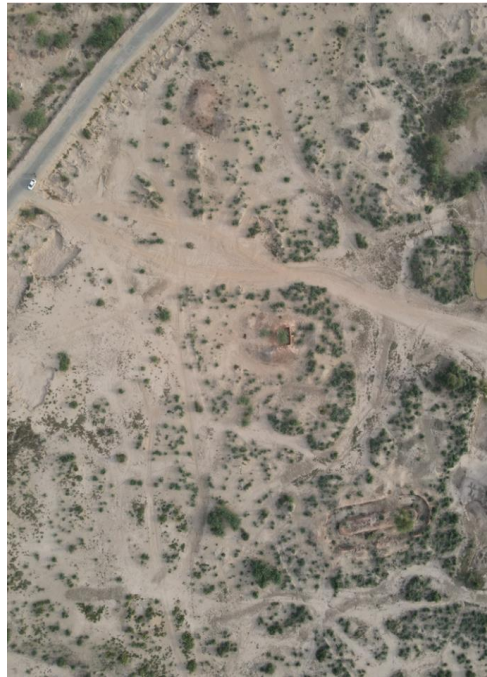


3. Research Methodology

3.1 Primary research

The researchers started this work from examining the map of district Bahawalpur. Shortlisted different places of utmost importance like Noor Mahal, Sadiq garah palace, and Drawer fort. Took permission for photography and went for photography tour. There they mainly focused on drone shots, so that along with architectural compositions they can also observe population patterns of the areas around these palaces. Some of the images from the photography and drone shots are present in the following for reference:

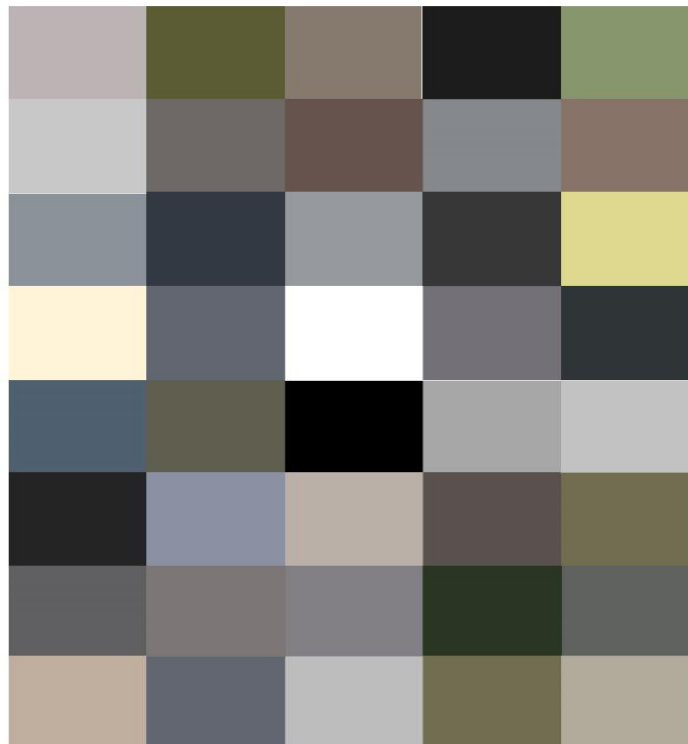




3.2 Secondary Research

3.2.1. Mood Board/Color palate

A mood board is created to collect visual inspiration, communicate brand identity, and decide on the product's visual direction. Mood boards are used early in the design process of a new product or when substantially revising an existing product. After photography I made my mood board or color palate. Its color scheme was also kept binary, as shown in picture below:

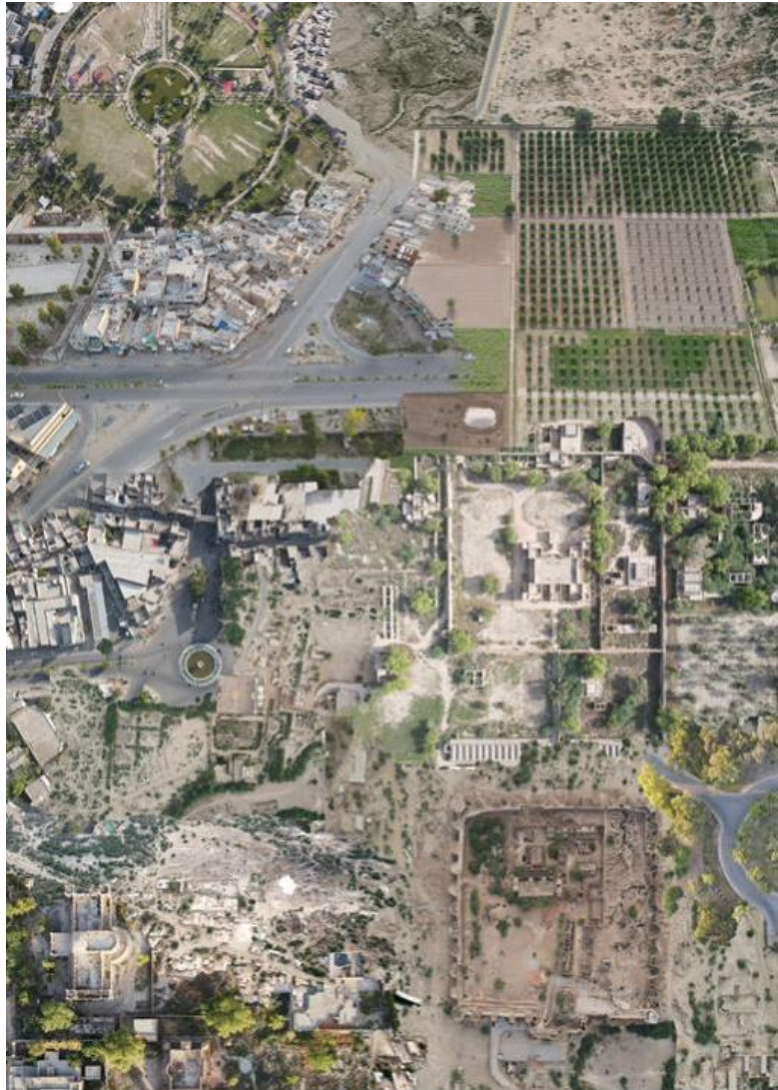


3.2.2. Design Board



3.2.3. Story Board

The storyboard “tells the story” of the designer’s idea. The storyboard includes original illustrations and flats, as well as additional materials (such as photos from the Internet or magazines, paper, fabric swatches, patterns, etc.) that have influenced the unique design. The researchers made their story board by combining and doing mix and match of clicked photos, to explain whole theme of my designs and research.



4 Design and Development

After selecting the images, the researchers moved on to the development stage where they started portraying my thoughts into compositions.

4.1. Paper sketches

My paper sketches are based on the technique of pen on paper. I did stippling and completed my designs with its minor details. Based on photography legends are made for each identical place or thing representation, and with its combination, variations and transitions targeted compositions are made.

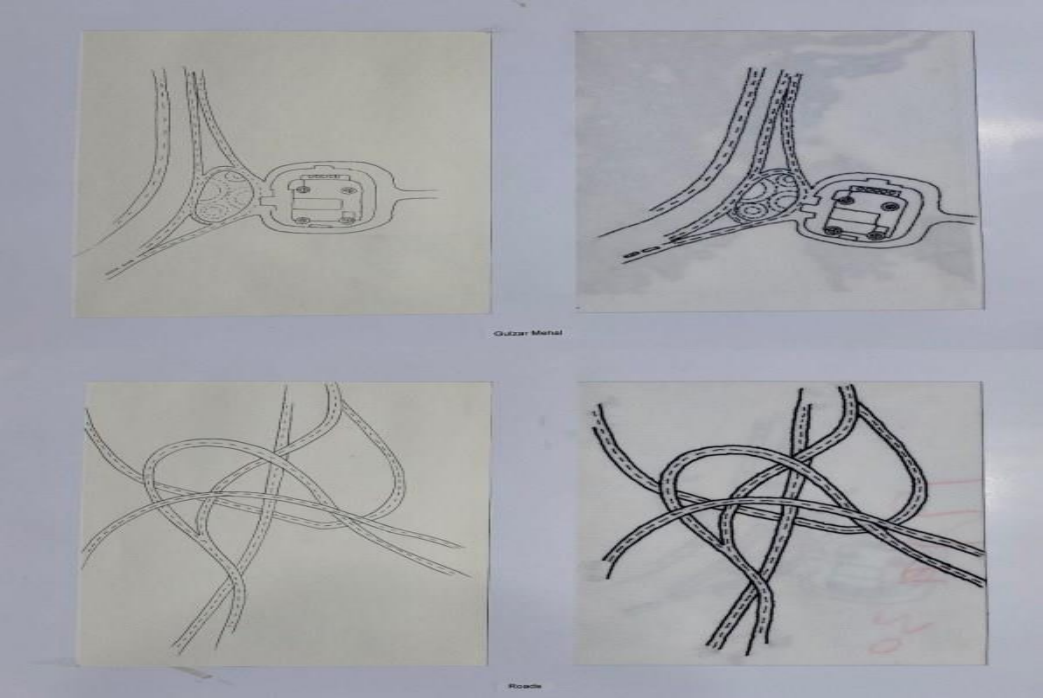
4.2. Fabric sample

Then to convert paper designs to fabric, thread on fabric technique was used. Like stippling here rice stitch is mainly used with the combination of knots and couching where needed, to add details.

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4.3. Legends

To understanding my design I made a key that indicates my representation of different key areas of composition on paper, and then on fabric like Qila Derawar , trees, roads, chowks, desert area and others are presented below in detail:



Paper work and Fabric Samples

Based on above legends following compositions are made as paper sketches and then fabric samples.

DESIGN NO 1:



<p>Paper Work</p>	<p>Fabric Work</p>
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Paper work

Material: Canson sheet, drawing pen 0.05-0.1

Technique: After the drawing basic outline of composition, then I did stippling to add detail and confinement. I started painting the compositions, which were chosen.

Fabric Sample

Material: silk based fabric, anchor thread.

Technique: After completing stippling, the next step was to transfer my composition to the fabric. There are different techniques to transfer designs on fabric. I chose to work with hand embroidery. In hand embroidery I used rice stitch mainly, but I also added knots and couching where needed elevate design.

5. Product Details and Final Presentation

I did my final display with presenting my products in three different ways i.e. installation, art piece and Shawls. All of them are explained thoroughly in following

5.1. Installation

In this category I made a back wall panel of size 16/8 feet. It is composed of 3D fabric slabs. These fabric slabs are embroidered and screen printed, that collectively exhibit a composition of my designs based on a bird eye view of the city.

5.1.1. Process work

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5.1.1.1. Prototype

Firstly a prototype was made with hand screen printing on fabric cubes to get exact



view point measurements. A picture of prototype is shown in following:



5.1.1.2. Design of wall panel



5.1.1.3. Making Tracing Sheet

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A Glimpse of Final Degree Show





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