

Dr.Habib Ahmed Afsar

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Pakistani/Swiss relational artist, researcher and coach working internationally with a vision of "creating spaces where beauty is celebrated". Founder of the Center of Arts-based Methodologies and Wellbeing in Karachi, Pakistan, and co-founder of an acclaimed community project, the Mini-zine Library. Advocates for a holistic concept of health and wellbeing. Current and on-going art-based research, An Imaginary PhD, revolves around exploring the metaphor of mother goddess as a relational practise towards a feminism beyond gender- one that encapsulates the rights of the planet- and the role of the arts there-in. Makes pretty things, dedicated to learning geometry and enjoys talking to trees.

Education:

- 2015: MA Fine Arts, **Art in Public Sphere**, Luzern School of Art and Design, Switzerland
- 2013: MA **Expressive Arts Coaching, Consulting and Education (with a minor in psychology)**, European Graduate School, Switzerland.
- 2004: MSc Health **Systems Management**, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK .
- 2002: Residency in **Community Medicine**, the Aga Khan University, Pakistan
- 2002 Fellow of College of Physicians and Surgeons (FCPS),Community Medicine, Pakistan.
- 1996: Bachelor of **Medicine**; Bachelor of **Surgery**, Ayub Medical College, Pakistan.

Work Experience

- 2019 to 2021: Director Arts and Wellbeing, PHC-global, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2017 to 2019: Member, Brocki Tigel und Schreineri, Zurich, Switzerland
- Since 2014: Team member and teaching faculty at Step Ahead, Berlin
- Since 20013: Relational Artist and Expressive Arts practitioner
- Since 2008: International public health consultant
- 2006-2007: Health Information Analyst, World Health Organisation, Islamabad, Pakistan
- 2006: Technical Officer, Monitoring und Evaluation, Family Health International Islamabad, Pakistan
- 2004-2005: Public Health Physician/ Team-leader for Somalia, Action Africa Help International, Nairobi, Kenya and Bossasso, Somalia.
- 2002-2004: Manager Service Development, Aahung, Karachi, Pakistan.
- 1998- 2002: Resident Community Medicine, Department of Community Health Sciences, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan.

Consulting positions:

- 2016 to date: Member Board, Atelier Yiribamako, Mali
- Since 2013: Advisory Council, Build a Bridge, Philadelphia, USA.
- Since 2009: Member Board of Directors Mountain Welfare Development Organisation, Islamabad, Pakistan.
- 2008 to 2013: General Advisory Body, SOS Rasissmus, Zürich, Switzerland.

Awards and grants:

- Prohelvetia Co-creation grant 2023/4 (Intimater Borders of Liminal Love- with Mara Zuest and Ipshita Maitra)
- Prohelvetia project grant 2021 (Karachi Cultural Mapping)
- Simurg grant 2021- Library of Peace
- Kulturagentenin artist grant - 2019, 2020 and 2021 (with Mara Zuest)
- Prohelvetia artist grant 2018 (with Mara Zuest)

- Prohelvetia research grant 2016 (with Mara Zuest)
- Salut letranger! 2013 from Département de l'économie et de l'acKon sociale (DEAS), Neauchatel (with Chloe Felix)
- Poster series created from research conducted by students of Schule Widmer , “Why is art important?” . Supported by Kulturagent.innen Schweiz für kreative Schulen . Awarded the “100 Beste Plakate” competition.

Ongoing works:

- The Mini-zine Library (nominated for Swiss Design Awards, 2025- Design as Mediation)
- An imaginary Phd- a multi-year, studio-based artistic research project that explores imagination as a legitimate mode of knowledge, art-making as methodology, and relational practice as inquiry.

Selected works in Public spaces

- Archeology of the Presence- An artist residency culminating in a community festival with Art as Foundation exploring art-making in post-war contexts
- The New Us - Mini-museumMe (II) . A participatory project with people of Albisriden as part of the About Us Festival, Zurich, Switzerland, 2023 (With Mara Zuest)
- Mini-museumMe (I). A participatory project with children exploring culture through stories and objects. BlickFelder Festival, Zurich, Switzerland, 2022 (with Alice Cantaluppi)
- Dubai Chalo- Research and curation of physical and on-line exhibition about the lived experiences of migrant workers to the GFF, in collaboration with University College London and the Aga KhanUniversity, Karachi, 2021 (with Imran nafees, Beenish Sarfaraz and team)
- Library of Peace. Creation of children’s library installation on the theme of Peace, Simurg grant, HIVE, Pakistan, 2021 (with Imran nafees, Beenish Sarfaraz and team)
- Re-Searching- Participatory wall installation and series of arts-based workshops exploring the concept of research as part of the exhibition “Auf der suche”, Helmhaus, Zurich, Switzerland
- Ausweis Kiosk- Aktions Tag, Uster, Switzerland. Autonome Schule, Zurich (with Mara Zuest)
- Boat- A participatory street installation for Refugee Day, Neauchatel, Switzerland (with Chloe Felix)
- Arbres à Palabres– a street intervention to celebrate race through a public sculpture, music, story telling and food, Neauchatel, Switzerland (with Chloe Felix)
- Emmenlich– 10 day Performative Installation ,Jugend Buero, Emmen, Switzerland

Selected works in Education Sector:

- How To, a series of workshops leading to publication as part of Programmes Kulturagent.innen Schweiz, Switzerland (with Mara Zuest and Dominik Bachman)
- Art facilitator at Breakthrough Summer Camp on Positive Mental health in young adolescence, with Synapse, Pakistan, 2023
- Art workshop facilitation with CPPD, School of Counselling, Pakistan (Play with Clay and Deep Sounding workshops)
- Facilitator Teacher Training for the Armenian State Pedagogical University (in collaboration with Arts as Foundation, Switzerland), 2022-23
- Kulture Woche-Sprache. A week long exploration “language” with children at Mosaic Schule, Neuenbach, Switzerland, 2022
- Why is Art important? A participatory arts-based research project with children at Schule Widmer, Langnau, Switzerland. In collaboration with Kultur Agentinnen Schweiz- won prize for most beautiful poster (with Mara Zuest)
- Mini-Zine Library Project and Zine Club. Schule Widmer and community, Langnau Gatikon, with Kultur Agentinnen Schweiz (with Mara Zuest)
- Bibliotheque Wanderlust- Performance Art Festival, Giswil, Switzerland (with Imran Nafees and Mara Zuest)
- Expressive art workshop with migrant children in integration class at Schulhaus Hofstrasse, Zürich.
- Songlines- a multi-disciplinary story-telling workshop for scientists with Project 325, as part of the ETH Zurich’s Cortona ‘

Selected works in Health Sector:

- Breakthrough, summer art camp (mental health) with Synapse, Pakistan- Arts-based Mental Health Camp with Habib University, Karachi, 2023

- Development of arts-based trainers manual and guide for Psychosocial First Aid for UNICEF, Pakistan, 2022
- Training and development of arts-based manual about Child Protection for Ministry of Health, Sindh and UNICEF, 2021
- Staff motivation and community mobilisation using the arts for the Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) roll out campaign, Ministry of Health, Pakistan, 2021
- Use of arts-based methodologies in community engagement. Blog series for PATH, USA. Health is my Right“, Seven day workshop and wall mural with teenagers, Imperial Public School, Lahore, Pakistan, 2021
- Development of community health workers diploma modules, Build a Bridge, Philadelphia, USA, 2013
- Expressive arts workshop with acid burn survivors in Pakistan. Acid Survivors Foundation, Islamabad, Pakistan, 2014

Exhibitions:

- 2024: Wald am Gleis Zwei. With [Thea Kuta](#) as part of the [Mini- zukunft Festival](#), Lichtensterg, Switzerland
- 2023: Lost Souls, Kookoo Kollektive in collaboration with [TDF Ghar](#), Karachi, Pakistan
- 2023: Apokalipta and Klinika, group show at [Unorte](#) , Zurich, Switzerland
- 2024: [Swiss Design Award 2024, Exhibition](#) Mediation and Scenography, Finalist MiniZine Library
- 2022: Mai-Karachi Festival, co-curated with Beenish Sarfarazat TDF Ghar, Karachi
- 2022: The Mini-Museum-Me. Co-curated with Alice Cantalupi the [Blickfelder Festival](#), Zurich, Switzerland
- 2021: Library of Peace. Participatory installation with HIVE, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2021: Dubai Chalo, co-curated with [Imran Nafees](#), as part of [SELMA](#) project, The Aga Khan Medical University, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2020: Am nächsten Tag ging die Sonne auf, with [Atelier Thomi Wolfensberger](#), Helmhaus, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2020: Atelier Futur - [Mini-zine library](#), With [Mara Zuest](#), [Gesneralle](#), Zurich, Switzerland
- 2020: Paperwork- Installation with Thea Kuta and Michael (Koko) Eberli, Zitronen, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2019: Re-Searching- performative installation as part of the exhibition “[Auf der suche](#)”, Helmhaus, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2019: Strange City- with [Mara Zuest](#). Installation with light and objects for Kunstszenen hosted at F&F School of Art and Design, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2018: Re-Searching- performative installation as part of the exhibition “[Auf der suche](#)”, Helmhaus, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2017: Mini-Zine Library- Lahore edition, with Mara Zuest and friends, [Imperial Public School](#), Lahore, Pakistan.
- 2016: Solo Exhibition, Lost and Found and Lost Again, Kunstverein, Zurich
- 2016: Musrara Mix Festival- with [Daphna Massey](#), Nagar School of Art, Jerusalem, Israel
- 2016: Exploration of Kaserne areal with [Franziska Koch](#)
- 2015: Year Zero, Performative installation and performance as part of group show, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2014: Barzakh-with [Thea Kuta](#), Citronen, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2014: Tea Art Salon- with Stini Arn, Residency at Citro Druke, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2013: What means to be Swiss, Installation with [Chloe Felix](#), Künstlerhaus Solothurn, Solothurn, Switzerland
- 2012: [Ein Buch bei Nacht](#), group show at [Bibliothèque Andreas Zuest](#)
- 2012: Cats on Trees, with Mara and Luis Zuest, Kunst Szene Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland
- 2012: Cabaret Vulgaire, [DIVO institute](#), Perla Mode, Zürich, Switzerland
- 2011: Separation, Performative Installation and Publication, Paradox -Gallery, Zürich
- 2011: Living in the abyss, group show with [DIVO institute](#), National Gallery Prague, The Czech Republic
- 2011: Motel Nirvana, [6th International Dada Festival](#), Rote Fabrik, Zürich, Switzerland
- 2010: Webstall, with [Stini Arn](#) and friends, Pignia, Switzerland

Selected publications:

- Intimate Borders of Liminal Love, with Mara Zuest and Ipshita Maitra, funded by Pro-Helvetia, Switzerland, Edition Haus am Gern, 2024
- How To- A zine about everything, with Mara Zuest and Dominique Bachman created by the children of Schule Widmer, Langnau, Switzerland in conjunction with Programmes Kulturagent.innen Schweiz
- With me im Widmer, series of 10 editions. A project of the mini- zinelibrary with Habib Afsar, Mara Zuest, Dominique Bachman, Dominik Bachmann, Michiko Hanawa, Esther Schena, Monika Stalder, the children of Schule Im Widmer and Schule Vorder Zelg, Langnau a. A. Switzerland Supported by Kulturagent.innen Schweiz für kreative Schulen
- Poster series created from research conducted by students of Schule Widmer , “Why is art important?” . Supported by Kulturagent.innen Schweiz für kreative Schulen . Awarded a prize in the “100 Beste Plakate” competition.
- Art-based Methodologies as a tool for Community Engagement- series of 3 blogs for Typhoid coalition (<https://www.coalitionagainststtyphoid.org/art-as-tool-for-community-engagement/>)
- Arts-based Community Mobilization and Social Impact, <https://www.artsbasedmethodologies.org/post/arts-based-community-mobilizaPon-and-social-impact>
- My Dady loves me. Visible Poem Festival publication, Bristol, 2013
- Afsar H. My Name, poem published in Poesis, 2012
- Afsar H, Younus M. Strengthening the role of Lady Health Workers In National Programme for Family Planning and Primary Health Care: The LHW perspective. 2004, J Ayub Med Coll Abbottabad ; 17(1)
- Afsar H, Younus M. Outcome of patient referral made by the Lady Health Workers in Karachi,
- Afsar H, Gill S. Theater for Development for Sexual Health Promotion
- A Case Study. Journal of Pakistan Medical Association, Sept 2004, 54 :487-490
- Afsar H, Younus M . Patient Referral at the Grass-roots Level in Pakistan. Nature and Science. 2004;2(4):18-28
- D. Nanan D, F. White F, I. Azam, H. Afsar and Hozhabri S. Evaluation of a water, sanitation, and hygiene education intervention on diarrhoea in Northern Pakistan. Bulletin of the World Health Organization 2003, 81 (3): 160-165
- Afsar H, Qureshi AF, Younus M, Gul A, Mahmood A. Factors affecting unsuccessful referral by the Lady Health Workers, Pakistan. Journal of Pakistan Medical Association , Nov 2003, 53
- Mahmood A, Kadir M, Afsar H, Barni N. Health needs of clients: insight by medical practitioners from two districts of Sind. Journal of Pakistan Medical Association, June 2002,52: 239-243
- Afsar H, Mahmood A, Kadir M, Barni N, Ali S. Knowledge attitude and practices regarding sexually transmitted infections in a rural district of Pakistan. Journal of Pakistan Medical Association, Jan 2002,52: 21-24