

Press Release: June 2019

**Beyond Faith:
Muslim Women Artists Today
14 June – 10 November 2019**

Beyond Faith brings together five contemporary Muslim women artists: Robina Akhter Ullah, Shabana Baig, Fatimah Fagihassan, Aida Foroutan and Usarae Gul.

This exhibition is the culmination of a major Arts and Humanities Research Council project led by Dr Saskia Warren, Senior Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Manchester. Exploring the roles and experiences of Muslim women in the UK cultural and creative industries, the project poses key questions about representation and the exclusivity of art institutions. This includes the Whitworth. Here the artists have opened a space to challenge social inequalities and to empower those who are under-represented.

Over the last year, the artists have selected pieces from their individual portfolios and the Whitworth's collections. Speaking in their own voice, they address themes of identity, culture, otherness and belonging, creating a co-authored conversation beyond faith.

Muslim women have been the subjects of negative media stereotypes emphasising religious conservatism, victimhood and subjugation. By contrast, the works shown here tell more complex stories through varied creative media. They reflect the artists' diverse personal experiences and rich artistic journeys.

The conversation continues in the exhibition *Four Corners of One Cloth: Textiles from the Islamic World* showcasing an intervention by the five artists.

**For further press information and to request images please contact:
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the Whitworth

Notes to editors:

A short film accompanies this exhibition featuring the artists.

About the Whitworth

The Whitworth is proudly part of the University of Manchester and serves as a bridge between the University and the people of the city; a place to meet, play and learn in public.

Its mission is to use art for social change; founded in 1889 as The Whitworth Institute and Park in memory of the industrialist Sir Joseph Whitworth for “the perpetual gratification of the people of Manchester”, with clear practical aims to counteract the malaises of inner-city life and to educate and inspire a city of makers and manufacturing.

The Whitworth re-opened to the public in 2015 after a major £17 million redevelopment by architects MUMA. It has welcomed over one million visitors since re-opening, and more than doubled its previous annual records. The redevelopment doubled the public space and created state-of-the-art new facilities to house the collection of over 55,000 works of art and included expanded gallery spaces, a study centre, learning studio, and a collections centre. The gallery was crowned Art Fund Museum of Year 2015, nominated for the prestigious Stirling Prize and named Best Emerging Cultural Destination in Europe. www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth

The gallery has historically been at the centre of civic and cultural life and this is also its future.

Beyond Faith: Muslim Women Artists Today is generously funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UKRI) and the Whitworth, The University of Manchester.



the Whitworth