

AIPS Fellowship Abstract- Kylie Gilchrist

2023-2024

AIPS Pre-Doctoral Fellowship Application 2023–24: Abstract Kylie Gilchrist 1 Karachi Modern: Situating Rasheed Araeen’s Early Works in the Urban Field Born in Karachi in 1935 and based in London since 1964, artist Rasheed Araeen is widely recognized as a leading figure in the transnational field of postwar art. Yet the growing scholarship on Araeen primarily addresses his work in London after 1964, obscuring his decade of practice in 1950–60s Karachi. My project re-centers Karachi as a foundational site of Araeen’s practice. Starting with Araeen’s unconventional formation as a professional engineer, amateur architect, and self-taught artist, I query how these unique investments shaped his art practice amidst urbanization, architectural modernization, and artistic experimentation in postcolonial Karachi. Through original archival and site-based research, I track how Araeen’s art practice negotiated and contested urban dynamics shaped by state formation, Cold War geopolitics, and economic development. I propose a new understanding of Araeen’s work oriented by his critical engagement with technology, and widen scholarship on Karachi’s urban history in a pivotal postcolonial period. Finally, I advance an innovative method of transnational art history foregrounding urban modernization as a driving dynamic of artistic modernism