

WELCOME  
to

# Mehfil-Cèilidh

An International Cultural Exchange between Lochalsh & Skye,  
and Islamabad, Rawalpindi & Lahore in April and May 2025

CALL FOR ARTISTS



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## Call for Artists

We are excited to invite applications from Pakistan based artists to take part in a fully funded international creative and cultural exchange, connecting artists from Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore in Pakistan, with artist Skye/Lochalsh, Scotland, UK.

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[OPEN CALL BRIEF](#)

# Mehfil-Cèilidh

## An International Cultural Exchange

Building relationships between two vibrant and distinct communities: the islands and mainland of Lochalsh and Skye in Scotland, and the cities of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore in Pakistan. Exploring themes of cultural memory, conviviality, and connection, we hope to foster creative collaborations that celebrate the rich artistic traditions and cultural practices of both regions.

# Open Call

## For Artists

Deadline for Applications  
Friday, 21 February 2025

DM or visit website for  
Further information and application.

ATLAS  
ARTS



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# ARTIST OPEN CALL: MEHFIL-CÈILIDH

## AN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN LOCHALSH & SKYE, AND ISLAMABAD, RAWALPINDI & LAHORE IN APRIL AND MAY 2025

School of Sociology, Quaid-i-Azam University is excited to announce a new open call opportunity for three Pakistan based artists to take part in a fully funded international creative and cultural exchange, connecting artists from Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore in Pakistan, with artists in Skye/Lochalsh, Scotland, UK.

The **Mehfil-Cèilidh** project is an international cultural exchange, that aims to build relationships between two vibrant and distinct communities: the islands and mainland of Lochalsh and Skye in Scotland, and the cities of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore in Pakistan. By exploring themes of cultural memory, conviviality, and connection, we hope to foster creative collaborations that celebrate the rich artistic traditions and cultural practices of both regions.

This exchange centers around the idea of a '**Mehfil-Cèilidh**'—a bringing together of two traditions. In Pakistan, a '**Mehfil**' is an Urdu word that means gathering or assembly, typically for the purpose of enjoying music, poetry, or other forms of art. In Scotland, a '**Cèilidh**' means "visit" or "gathering" in Gàidhlig, and refers to a gathering often including storytelling, poetry, music, and dancing. Both customs create spaces for collective celebration, storytelling, and the exchange of ideas. During the exchange, you will have the opportunity to contribute to this shared experience and collaborate with artists from both regions, creating new connections through art, culture, and conversation.

The exchange will involve a series of online sessions spanning 6 months, and a **seven-day trip** to the UK (where a group of five artists and cultural workers will travel to Skye/Lochalsh and participate in various cultural activities and artistic workshops hosted by the project team from the UK). Similarly, the Pakistan team will host a **six-day visit** here, welcoming the UK team to share their practices and experiences with the local community.

This project is in partnership School of Sociology, Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan and Atlas Art, Scotland, UK, funded by the British Council's International Collaboration Grants, and invites artists and creative practitioners to explore shared (and different) traditions of storytelling, music, dance, and cultural expression.

**Who will be travelling?** The three artists chosen from the open call will join Pakistan team's members Mamoona Khan and Muhammad Ibrahim (the initiators of this project), who will together travel to the UK for one week, after collectively hosting a six-day visit to Pakistan for five artists from the UK.

**When?** The visits will take place in Pakistan in April 2025 and in Skye in May 2025, with online meetings and sharing from February 2025.

### What's Included?

**Artist fee:** Artists will be paid the following:

- Participation in a 7-day trip to UK in May 2025
- Joining and helping to host a visit for the UK team in Pakistan for 6 full days in April 2025
- Planning and hosting 6 days of activities (such as hosting a talk, sharing, walk, music session, workshop etc) as part of the 6-day Pakistan trip
- 6 x 1-hour online sessions, between February–July 2025.
- Post-project Evaluation

**All Travel and Accommodation:** In addition to the artist fee, all travel, visa, accommodation, food, and related expenses will be covered, and arranged for residency in the UK.

**Support:** School of Sociology, Quaid-i-Azam University will provide full support, including assistance with visas, travel arrangements, event organizing, access support, hosting, and logistical coordination. A budget will be also available for you to share your work in Pakistan.

**Who can apply?** Applications are welcome from a wide range of practices such as visual artists, musicians, dancers, poets, storytellers, writers, craftspersons and artisans. For travelling groups to UK artists focusing on traditional tabla playing music, and continuity stone carving artists will be preferred. Whether your practice is rooted in traditional or contemporary forms, we invite you to apply if you are interested in connecting with others and sharing your creative passion. Women artists are encouraged to apply.

### To be eligible to take part you should:

- Hold a Pakistani passport
- Have a strong connection with local traditions and art.
- Possess significant connection to traditional stone carving art and/or tabla playing,
- Have a strong desire to share and learn through this international cultural exchange opportunity
- with the primary outcomes supporting creative and artistic work with reasonable skill and care and to the highest professional standards,
- Be available in April and May 2025 to join both trips in their entirety
- Be available to join 6 x 1 hour long meetings online between February and July 2025
- Meet the entry requirements for travel to the UK.
- Be up for hosting activities or sharing for up to six days during the UK team's trip to Pakistan.
- Must be over the age of 18 by October 2024

**How to Apply?** To apply, please submit a statement, which responds to the following points (maximum 1000 words):

1. Your creative practice, approach, and areas of interest (max 300 words)
2. Why you are interested in participating in this exchange (max 300 words)
3. What would you like to bring and share to the Mehfil-Cèilidh (max 300 words)
4. Confirmation that you meet the above eligibility criteria. (max 100 words)

Please share two or three examples of your work (this can be in any format ie. attached image, video link, website, social media)

If you prefer, you may submit an alternative format, such as a short video or audio recording (no longer than five minutes), instead of a written statement.

Within your application, please ensure to include the following information:

- \* Your full name (first and last)
- \* Your date of birth
- \* Your are currently based in?
- \* Your phone number

Please email your application to: [mehfilceilidh@qau.edu.pk](mailto:mehfilceilidh@qau.edu.pk)

or Fill out your application using the Google form [here](#)

**Deadline for Applications:** Friday 21 February 2025, 11:59pm PKT

**Further Information** If you have any questions or need assistance with the application process, please contact Pakistan team representative at [mehfilceilidh@qau.edu.pk](mailto:mehfilceilidh@qau.edu.pk) or call on [03203338060](tel:03203338060)\*. We are very happy to talk things through and encourage anyone to think about applying to do so.

\*To ensure your call is answered promptly, we kindly request that individuals seeking support via phone call introduce themselves via message beforehand.

Please note the school of sociology Office will be closed on weekends (Saturday, Sunday). Any enquiries during this time will be picked up week commencing Monday, or Online at social media at Mehfil accounts on social media.

**Shortlist and Interviews** Ten artists will be shortlisted for interview w/c 10 February 2025. Following these three artists will be selected by the mid of February. All applicants will be informed by 28 February 2025.

### Key Dates

- **Deadline for applications:** Friday 21 February 2025, 11:59 PKT
- **Shortlisted artist interviews:** Week commencing 24 February 2025.
- **Applications outcome:** 28 February 2025
- **Online Exchange sessions:** February–July 2025
- **Exchange trips:** Hosting week in Mid-April 2025 in Pakistan, travelling to Skye/Lochalsh in Mid-May 2025 (exact dates to be confirmed)



This project is in partnership between AtlasArts Scotland and Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan supported by the British Council International Collaboration Grant, to explore shared and different artistic traditions and cultural expression.

**About Quaid-i-Azam University**

Quaid-i-Azam University is a public research university in Islamabad, Pakistan, renowned for its academic rigor, cutting-edge research, and vibrant campus life.

**About ATLAS**

ATLAS Arts supports and develops a programme of long-term artist commissions, education projects, arts events, residencies, screenings, workshops and gatherings across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh.

If you have any questions or need assistance with the application process, please email us at [mehfilceilidh@qau.edu.pk](mailto:mehfilceilidh@qau.edu.pk) call on +923203338060, or DM on our social media.

Mehfil-Cèilidh is funded by the British Council's International Collaboration Grants, which are designed to support UK and overseas organisations to collaborate on international arts projects.

