

# MASHAL ZAHRA

CREATIVE STRATEGIST | DESIGN RESEARCHER | EDUCATOR

## CONTACT

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## EDUCATION

- MA Social Design  
Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)  
2024-2025
- BDes Textile Design  
Pakistan Institute of Fashion & Design  
2013-2017



## TOOLKIT

- Microsoft Office
- Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign)
- Canva
- Figma
- Mural
- Google Forms



## STRENGTHS

- Research and insight
- Strategy and frameworks
- Storytelling and writing
- Design craft and spatial thinking
- Facilitation and collaboration



## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Researcher and strategist with a design background and 8+ years of experience moving from insight to framework to expression. I research people, communities, and context, turn what I find into clear strategic direction, and work with designers so ideas keep their purpose as they become identities, materials, and spaces. Most at home with work that connects culture, craft, and community.



## WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Consultant JUN 2026 – AUG 2026  
Public Servants LLC, Remote

- Designed and ran a national research initiative with public servants, using structured surveys and interviews to understand their needs and challenges.
- Synthesized multi-method data into analytical reports and translated stakeholder insights into practical recommendations for the organization's offerings.

Creative Strategy & Design Consultant APR 2026 – MAY 2026  
The Urban Studio , Baltimore, Maryland

- Led research and strategic direction for a kid-friendly pocket guide, evaluating it for young audiences; findings informed the design decision.
- Combined a precedent analysis, a page-by-page design audit, and a participant session into a framework of principles, tone, and narrative arc for facilitated and solo use.

Graphic Designer and Impact Strategist OCT 2025 – DEC 2025  
Curated with Karmen LLC, Baltimore, Maryland

- Designed instructional materials and an interactive workbook connecting college students with entrepreneurs from under-resourced neighborhoods through participatory, accessible tools.
- Researched audiences and scoped partner schools and programs to support the product's growth and reach.

Creative Impact Fellow OCT 2024 – May 2025  
Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Baltimore, Maryland

Project: Multiscale RECIPES for Sustainable Food Systems

- Ran qualitative interviews across an equity-centered food systems network and turned them into strategy briefs that identified patterns and supported shared learning.
- Facilitated virtual sensemaking sessions in Mural, shaping how insights were structured and visualized for different audiences.

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## LANGUAGES

- English (Fluent)
- Urdu (Native)
- Punjabi



## ACHIEVEMENTS

### Publications

Master’s Thesis, MICA (2025); BA Thesis, PIFD (2017); cohort & journal publications

### Exhibitions

Master’s Thesis Exhibition, Peale Museum, Baltimore (2025); BA Thesis Exhibition, PIFD, Lahore (2017)

### Awards

Leslie King Hammond Scholarship, MICA (2024–25)



## CERTIFICATIONS

### Online Teaching Level 1

Online course by NAHE Higher Education Commission

### Internationalization in Universities

Co-funded by Erasmus



### Communications and Outreach Strategist

JUN – AUG 2024

SABAH Pakistan, Lahore, Pakistan

Project: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Business

Association (SAARC) of Home-Based Women Workers.

- Facilitated workshops with craftswomen to co-create information kits and storytelling assets that carried their own voices.
- Led a brand identity refresh and built rights-based outreach materials for a network of home-based women workers.

### Design Educator and Trainer

AUG 2017 – JUNE 2024

Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, Remote

- Designed and taught curricula in research design, knowledge synthesis, and entrepreneurial practice; mentored 200+ students and emerging professionals.

### Communications Designer & Consultant

JAN 2017 – JAN 2025

Deans Textiles-Deans Neckties, Lahore, Pakistan

- Built brand and visual storytelling systems informed by audience research, and streamlined communication between marketing and sales teams.



## CIVIC INITIATIVES

### Training Women & Youth in Digital Design

NAVTTTC · Lahore Chamber of Commerce · Trade Development Authority

### Design Exploration and Knowledge Exchange

Swedish School of Textiles, Borås · Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design

### Civic Design Projects

Neighborhood Design Centre, Baltimore: Liberty Heights wayfinding and identity

Public Servants LLC: Experience Tapestry zine for a conference



## CASE STUDIES

### Sustainable Behavior Change, MICA

Translated field insights into visual storytelling tools promoting sustainable practices

### Financial Accessibility for Entrepreneurs, IGNITE CAPITAL X MICA

Researched barriers to capital; developed insight decks and stakeholder-focused knowledge products

### Community Health Engagement, JACQUES X MICA

Synthesized research into communication strategies and visual knowledge products

### Textile Expo Proposal, Pakistan

Team exhibition design proposal; completed site surveys and space mapping.