

// Breaking News:
Student activists occupy finance offices in
protest of University fossil fuel investments

[READ MORE](#)

- [MANCUNION](#)
- [ARTS](#)
- HALIMA CASSELL: ECLECTICA – GLOBAL INSPIRATIONS



PHOTO: CLAUDIA NEURAY

Halima Cassell: Eclectica – Global Inspirations

WRITTEN ON 7TH FEBRUARY 2019. POSTED IN [ARTS](#)

The largest exhibition of Halima Cassell's work up to date has just opened at Manchester Art Gallery. If you are looking for something refreshing to do for an afternoon, this is a perfect opportunity.

Ceramist and sculptor Halima Cassel was born in Kashmir and grew up in Manchester. Her multicultural heritage, as well as her recent travels to Japan, Italy, and Pakistan, all inform her work. A keen interest in architecture, geometry, and natural forms is also reflected throughout her pieces.

In Cassel's [own words](#), "I create a mood and feeling of dynamic tension in my work by playfully manipulating the planes and facets of the patterns against each other."

Throughout the exhibition, one can admire Halima's exquisitely-shaped pieces. Each line seamlessly merges into the other. Cassell's talent lies in her ability to visualise patterns. She then transforms these into attractive 3D structures.

The lightness and delicacy of each piece belie the heaviness of the materials used. The various artworks are the product of between 100 and 280 hours or more of work.

Clay pieces are then left for weeks and even months to dry. The firing kiln is the ultimate, most precarious stage. Hours of labour could in an instant be negated. The pieces can crack or even explode under pressure at any time.

One of the most thought-provoking pieces of the exhibition is her latest work, *Virtues of Unity*. A work in progress, each element is composed of clay from a certain country. Each pattern is unique and portrays a specific positive aspect of the country's culture. Once finished, *Virtues of Unity* will represent all 195 nations on earth.

The idea for it emerged from Halima's international heritage. She was considered an immigrant in Britain. When returning to Pakistan, she was then referred to as a foreigner. This feeling of displacement developed her wish to create a piece which emphasised the commonalities, rather than the distinctions, between every nation.

I would recommend going when the Gallery is least busy. This allows one to fully immerse oneself into the intricacies of each piece, soothing in both their delicacy and detail. All in all, this is an exhibition which is sure to bring you both serenity and food for thought.