



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Honorary Degree Citation

The degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, honoris causa,
conferred on Dr. Zainub Verjee
Tuesday, June 6, 2023

Madam Chancellor, how to introduce a visual artist in words? Perhaps best to begin with the artist's own words—hung high on the wall during a recent exhibition at Vancouver's Centre A gallery and declaring in bold red neon: Art is the public good This is the cri de coeur of Zainub Verjee, a trailblazing SFU alumna who, for the past 40 years, has straddled the worlds of art, policy and diplomacy to build an international reputation as an artist, writer, critic and public intellectual.

Born in Nairobi and educated in England, Ms. Verjee arrived in Vancouver in the 1970s to study Business Administration and Economics at SFU. Energized by the transformational power of arts and culture, she explored new aesthetics, forged new alliances of women and labour, and embedded racial equity into her evolving discourse and practice.

Now a Senior Fellow of Massey College and a McLaughlin College Fellow, Ms. Verjee's scholarship continues to raise the level of cultural policy debate and c (lic)fhr tt nthe te lasnd c (lic)JTJ Tw C contributed to international cultural initiatives such as Status of the Artist and Cultural Diversity, and helped build the British Columbia Arts Council, the Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society, and the In Visible Colours film festival and symposium. Among her many honours, she