



December 3rd, 2018

Admissions and Recruitment
OCADU
100 McCaul St.
Toronto ON M5T 1W1

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

To Whom it May Concern

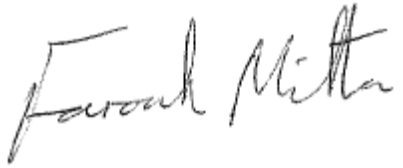
It is with very special pleasure that I write this letter in support of Afraaz Mulji's application to OCADU.

I first encountered Afraaz's creative work in my capacity as International Coordinator of Continuing Educational Programmes for Ismaili Muslim Communities. Afraaz developed and submitted a compelling proposal to run two workshops in Dar-es-salaam in November 2018. The titles of the workshops were: "The Art of Creative Freethinking" and "How to listen: Bearing witness to the Struggles of the Human Condition". His proposal was unanimously approved by the review committee. We also provided him recommendations on textual sources and conceptual perspectives that he may want to consider including in his workshops. To Afraaz's credit, he followed up and made contact with me personally, requesting more detailed feedback on the proposed recommendations.

From this encounter, conducted over Skype, began a remarkable collaboration between Afraaz and myself. I was immediately struck by his sharp, sensitive and curious mind. He very quickly absorbed texts I would recommend in the areas of arts-based social justice education and aesthetic criticism. For example, we discussed ways in which he could incorporate ideas from the writings of: Northrop Frye (i.e. distinctions between temporal and spatial arts, structured respectively by rhythm and pattern); short essays of Glenn Gould (i.e. on the nature of the creative process), and the poetry of Sufi mystics such as Jalal al-Din Rumi and Ibn Arabi who explore human possibilities of renewal in the face of suffering. I have been teaching some of these texts for over two decades at University of Victoria and Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, England, and Afraaz's level of intellectual engagement and aesthetic response stands out among the top 5% of the students I have taught --- yet, if taking into account Afraaz's age, he clearly stands out as one of the most exceptional students I have met. The workshops delivered last month were a huge success.

I believe Afraaz will thrive at OCADU, and be able to find an area of focus (and programme) in which he can excel, as both a talented musician and educator. Candidates of Afraaz's caliber are rare. I cannot recommend him highly enough and strongly urge you to accept him. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Farouk Mitha". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Farouk Mitha, Sessional Lecturer, Faculty of Education, University of Victoria,
fmitha@uvic.ca