

ANNA MOLKA AND WESTERN 'ISMS'

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The real function of art is to express feeling and transmit understanding through imaginative and skillful interpretation of experience. This function enables an artist to discover a new power – the power to build up a world of his own, an 'ideal world'. For this ideal world he seeks different directions which complement and complete one another. This development of art is the hallmark of every nation. Not only our land has nurtured talent within, but also served as a reflecting mirror for the outside world. The historical and traditional influences have found expression in the works of our artists, who have been influenced alike by modern developments in the art, branching out into various schools of expression.

After partition many local artists, ambitious to find their own individuality as a nation, rediscovered the tracks their fore-fathers had lead; resulted in a greater national consciousness. **Chughtai** abandoned Hindu mythological concepts and concentrated on Muslim heroic events, poetry and folklores in an idealized state to glorify the rich heritage through water color on paper. **Ustad Allah Bukhsh** rejected his previous position as a 'Krishna Painter' and presented village folklores and festivals instead. His adaption of European technique, oil on canvas, was utilized to depict mysterious atmospheres of woodland scenes. **Haji Muhammad Sharif** and **Ustad Shujaullah** were the last of the lineage of old masters of miniature, who kept alive that great tradition. Fyzee Rahamin, S.H. Askari, and some other great portraitists continued painting elites and high officials with their diversified talents.

Attaining national identity, was not a goal to be achieved by younger generation of artists; with their new sense of freedom, they all shared a desire for adventure and experiment to meet the international standards. They looked to the visual language of the West to facilitate the growth of its own contemporary visual vocabulary and conceptual possibilities. Most of that generation of artists had gone abroad to England, America, France and Italy for their academic training and all had brought back the influences and styles of foreign artists though to be assimilated or rejected according to each artist's personal preferences and requirements.

Amrita Sher-Gil, was influenced by Gauguin's exotic dark bodies, bright color patterns and abstract shapes during her studies in France. That influence she transformed into her powerful innovative style of painting daily life situations and used indigenous colors. **Zubaida Agha** brought along Surrealist elements from France. Her style of painting was highly in debt to Matisse. These influences she produced in her works in a decorative manner with a touch of mystery, which was closer to stained-glass effect at

times. Another European trained artist, **Shakir Ali** was the most potent presence in the early modern movement in Pakistan. The influence of Cubism, he utilized in most of his still lifes and portraits. He never abandoned the local folklore and Ajanta motifs. **Khalid Iqbal** practiced that foreign influence into painting figures and realistic landscapes and **Sadequain** developed highly personal style of his own into calligraphy and stylized figures, besides many European influences.

While all those artists resisted the European trend of insisting on working in the figurative tradition, **Anna Molka** proved herself a strong force in propelling painters in that direction; she not only brought along European influence of her training, but herself was a native of England and settled in Pakistan in 1940 after marriage.

Her landscapes according to many art critics, reflect a close kinship with the works of Monet, the Impressionist, Van Gogh the Post Impressionist, Matisse the Fauvist and Emil Nolde the Expressionist and she claimed herself an Expressionist too. Before we take a closer look on her personal style, It would be interesting to go back to the times and places with which this kinship developed.

Emergence of Impressionism:

England, Germany and France were the homes of Romantic movement which taught people to notice and feel the charm of nature; although some high Renaissance artists were also admired for the way they used nature to articulate some classical or religious subjects. Rural landscape had always been considered a lesser genre by academic tradition and that was the key reason why it became the leading area for the stylistic and technical innovations. Constable and Turner were the greatest and earliest painters, who later influenced the French Romantics and Impressionists who in turn raised landscape painting to still greater heights.

- i) The technical devices of Constable, the broken touches and flicks of pure white with a palette knife were a decisive influence.
- ii) Turner, who was a great admirer of Venetian painters, specially Titian, was the first modern painter, who reached the peak of his ability as a painter of dramatic scenes in natural settings with remarkable visual memory through spontaneity of technique. It was not nature but the extensiveness of the universal that obsessed that great colorist.

As Herbert Read said 'all human beings, completely organized and justly tempered, enjoy color; it is meant for comfort and delight; it is richly bestowed on the great pieces of art; being associated with life, light and purity. Death, night and pollution of all kinds are colorless.' It is not strange that Monet and Pissarro the future Impressionists discovered that comfort and delight in Turner's works.

- iii) Delacroix once wrote 'nature is a dictionary; we go to it for a right tone, the particular form; but we do not regard it as an ideal composition which we must copy, the painter goes to nature for suggestion, but the harmony which he builds up on this basis is the work of his imagination'. With such ideology, and immense influence of Venetian School, Rubens and Constable, he also was greatly admired by Impressionists.
- iv) The artists of Barbizon School, are best remembered today for extending the habit of painting directly, shifting their studios out of doors and blurring the distinction between sketch and finished picture. Daubigny was the first artist, whose work was criticized as being more 'impressions'; was a decisive influence on Monet. So he had a high claim to be the grand-father of Impressionism.
- v) Monet's works pointed the way to Impressionism.

In 1874 'Impressionism' a name given to a coherent group of painters with outstanding painting style, by an art critic Louis Leroy, who published a review of the exhibition held at studio of a Photographer Nadar in Paris, in a magazine 'La Charivari'. This scornful comment was given to the painting of Monet's 'Sunrise', the leader of movement. The other members of the group include Renoir, Pissarro, Sisley, Degas, Laotrec and Cezanne.

'LINE' reigned supreme at that time under the banner of Neo Classicists. They considered color only a complement to line, an inferior though unavoidable adjunct to it. Against this narrow doctrine, the originators of a modern approach emerged and formulated the ideas that led to Impressionism.

Impressionist's methodology owed its aesthetic value to the fact that it was the expression of love. 'As the air fills everything, the sun over floods the whole earth, so is the God dwells in everything and everything dwells in him'. This mystical sense of unity and creation provided a basis for pictorial unity for them. They saw world as a continuous unbroken flow of light and brilliant color throughout the picture and by those means they achieved an effect which painting had never known before. In that course of development the concept of landscape changed from things to impressions.

Impressionists, instead of painting nature through a veil of classical ideals, painted it with all her wanton charm. They realized the colors used by old masters were not brilliant enough to suit the surroundings. This interest for finding true colors led them into fields from studios, where the brilliance of light in the open air taught their brush a new language.

They rejected dark thinly painted shadows, subtle tonal modeling and academic chiaroscuro. Instead they advocated bright colors and applied flat, opaque paints in shadows and light areas alike with uniformly loaded brush in similarity to Venetian technique.

They had taken much trouble to describe the life of their contemporaries, to show them their own pleasures to help them forget their sorrows. The avant-garde artists no longer represented peasant's life but modern city life – world of cafes, racetracks, parks, concerts, operas, and ballets. They portrayed street singers, waiters, barmaids, shopgirls, dancers, happy picnic parties and other joyous themes. They avoided deep dark forest settings, choosing instead open scenes, city boulevards, river and sea-scapes.

The momentary effects of sun light and color on object and mobile water surface were their two chief interests. They pursued instant for the instants' sake as the immediate response of their retinas and brushes, to their observation of nature. Full face light of midday sun was most popular, where the shadows were at their shortest, full of reflective light and barely darker in tone than the sunlit parts. Water and its mobile fluctuation, reflections of surrounding objects as mirror-images strengthening the design quality, were all their favorites.

They extended their easels in front of natural scenery, to depict the first impression of the fast changing fleeting ephemeral lighting effects which had to be translated into paint for which speedy rapid sketch like 'Alla Prima' painting technique grew popular. 'Language' of a new brushwork was adapted for their unorthodox concepts. Like hand writing, their diversified brush strokes reflected their individual personalities.

Impressionists covered the surface with countless hatchings, loose scrawls or tightly knit strokes of dots, dabs and dashes until an image emerged. To 'read' this transcription, for it was the eye of the beholder that established the cohesion of the countless signs scattered over the canvas; it was his eye that endows the painter's image with its ultimate gloss. The juxtaposed colors on the canvas for the eye to fuse at a distance, thus produced colors more intense than could be achieved by mixing on the palette.

With the invention of camera, on one hand photography showed them for the first time ever an 'objective' picture of reality, provoking some artists to attempt an even more fastidiously representational style of painting. On the other hand, for Impressionists and others it was a release from the demands of naturalistic painting of visual world, leaving them free to pursue their own personal recording of nature into optical perceptions, a phenomenon beyond the camera's reach. Delicate reflected lights in shadows and gradated halftones were destroyed by photography. The resulting exaggeration of dark and light gave dramatic, simplified areas of strong tonal contrasts, which flattened form into broad, uniformed total shapes and thus depicted a simplified direct impression of natural world.

Neo-Impressionists:

Impressionists tried to apply the current theories about colors of spectrum forwarded by contemporary scientists. They were far too good painters to paint a theory and probably not good enough scientists to understand the scientific angle completely.

Neo-Impressionists Seurat and Signac no longer sought merely to capture fleeting effects of light and color in nature, instead they wished to render a more universal and timeless record of contemporary life. Through dot technique they rendered tonal value. But instead of gradation between white and brown characteristic of academic classicism; they explored the means of presenting tonal gradation through the use of juxtaposition of pure colors which gave a stiff, sculptural artificiality to the composition.

Impressionism was a short and limited episode in the history of art. They taught us to see color in shadow; it achieved something more than a technical advance which changed our perception of nature. Nature herself does not change, but artists can teach us to see her differently, can bring her closer, can unveil her hidden beauties. These innovators transformed the world for us. Faithful to 19th Century natural philosophy, they all remained committed to a depiction of natural world.

Merely to study and reproduce the color vibration of nature does not result in a work of art. What could not be done by the photographic lens was achieved by the painters: a projection of their inner sensibility, the selection of appropriate idioms to constitute a balanced composition.

Pissarro said 'Happy are those who see beauty in the modest spots where others see nothing! everything is beautiful, the whole question lies in knowing how to interpret'. Their paintings of happiness, although one of its charms for us, thus that limitation thereby cut off from the deepest intuitions of the human spirit.

Impressionism has not yet become part of history; it is still a living legend, with a firmness of purpose which adversity could not destroy.

MONET:

The beginning of Impressionism had often been outlined as a chain activated by Turner, continued by Manet and resulting in the art of Monet; most truly and typically an Impressionist who was highly appreciative of Turner's romantic approach of painting.

He did not choose his subjects at random, while the choice was made, a pictorial solution was already in his mind, without identifying an object, he recorded it quickly with freedom of handling which was his hall mark.

He had found rhythm and types of brush strokes to interpret images of waves and reflections, snow flakes, fog, shimmer, glow and foliage of trees, which he unified as a bulk. His painting fabric is composed entirely of an over-all accumulation of small divided touches of bright color like a mosaic of tiny beads. Sun on water, sparkling images, spectrum of his colors and mixture of his tones has no counter part in European painting. In his personal study of the effects of mixed color on the eye of the beholder, he learnt which tones expand and which contract, which advance and which recede. When the pace of activity was quick, the tempo of his brush was faster, the

strokes were broader and contrasts of value and colors were bolder. The dancing light and shade on lapping water enforced a technique almost as broken and open as possible like handwriting. For that handwriting, landscape was no excuse but a reason for him to paint.

He once said 'your error is to wish to reduce the world to your measure, whereas, by enlarging your knowledge of things you find knowledge of self enlarged'.

He further advised his pupils 'forget about the subject, only observe in the form of color construction until it becomes an impression of the scene before you'.

He wished he had been born blind and then had suddenly gained his sight so that he would have begun to paint without knowing what the objects were that he saw before him.

He was astonished that how could English painters of 19th Century had painted house brick by brick, which they could not see because of mist and fog.

Matisse passed the barrier of tone to tone conformity to nature for the joy of unhampered colorism. Under Monet's influence, Van Gogh painted his 'sunflower' after Monet's sunflowers'. Monet's momentary phenomenon, weather and highly charged intensification of nature and general power strokes were carried later by Van Gogh. Gauguin carried forward his idea of flat colors into interpretation of nature, decorative patterns and symbols.

Post impressionism was a term used to describe the different styles of the immediate successors to Impressionism and an attempt to re-organize plastically the spontaneous practices and the formlessness of the Impressionist's works. In a self conscious way Cezanne, Seurat and Gauguin tried to organize reality to formalize and arrange what they saw and felt, to some extent Lautrec and unconsciously Van Gogh were all in that movement.

In that process we saw the twinkling colors of Impressionists in the frozen sculpturesque volumes of Cezanne, in the immobile forms of Seurat, in the controlled symbolic patterns of Gauguin and in the calligraphic, emotional brush strokes of Van Gogh. They did not form a group, nor did they exhibit together, but each had passed at one time through the Impressionistic technique. Apart from each other, Cezanne with his lonely experiments at Aix, Seurat working at night in his studio, Gauguin running away to another civilization and Van Gogh escaping into the slightly disordered realm of his own mind, each one of them was influential in his own way.

Van Gogh rejected tradition and researched the properties of color, line, space, shapes, textures, scale and composition to extract just those essences that conveyed their mood or 'inner necessity'. The visual experience was of primary interest to him,

through which he fully exercised his intellectual and moral judgements. The reality with which he was concerned, was that of the emotions, the artist's very being. He was influenced by Millet, Pointillists, Japanese art, Dutch painters, Daumier, Barbizon artists and Michelangelo.

His passion and love for nature was a deeply personal instrument for him. He wanted not an equivalence of nature but its more intense re-creation as controlled deformation and distortion; so he twisted what he saw into an expression of his own despair and reveal innate structure of things through intensification of sensitive mood of color, tone and texture used independently. He abstracted nature for his own imagination of large swirling movements, stylization of strokes and flame like lines, while painting specific trees, plants and shrubs to enhance the expression. He involved himself deeply with the objects he painted and thus destroyed the protective barriers between himself and the world around in order to create a powerfully communicative art. Unlike Gauguin he preferred to have subjects from nature and disliked working only through imagination.

His brush work was essentially graphic as if he drew with color. In all his works there ran a restless, flowing line, curling in endless , agitated spirals – a character matured through his earlier drawings with pencil and graphic arts. Emotional difficulties often led him to seek release in drawing which was his only pleasure. Practice of drawing enabled him to produce harsh contrasts with powerful line and modeling. The saturation of light was conveyed by a sort of hailstorm of dots and dashes with dazzling colors: specially when he was obsessed by the fierce sunlight. Colors squeezed with frenzied urgency from the tube led him to achieve intensity of expression.

His brush spoke a language of its own, a sweeping assurance that transcribe the most volatile perceptions onto the canvas. He painted from within, and that inner glow emanating from his pictures and in the pigments themselves transformed even humbler appearances; thus giving a truly universal significance.

He had perfectly ordinary taste in things. He never had to go around the corner to get his inspiration; the immediate , obvious; front view of every thing was sufficient for his creative impulse.

He never painted holy personalities but he made holy the people he painted. He preferred painting eyes of human beings rather than to paint cathedrals. He made series of self-portraits with tormented eyes. He captured human body with elongated brushstrokes, capable at once of describing summarily, even brutally the volumes of the body with short enveloping brushstrokes.

He said 'the work of art is not the record of beauty already existed but the expression of an emotion felt by the artist and conveyed to the spectator'. He constantly resisted the idea of art for art's sake and expressed through it his tragic sense of life.

'The imagination' is a faculty to develop, it enables us to create a more comforting nature than we perceive at glance, for we see something changeable, gone in a flash'.

His hatchings, arabesques and dot patterns in painting were spontaneous not for mere mannerism. He exclaimed 'I should like to put into a friend's portrait, the appreciation and the love I have for him'. His brushstrokes interweaved with feeling like music played with emotion. He further said 'I want to say something comforting in painting as music is comforting. The uglier I get, nastier, sicker and poorer, the more I want to avenge myself by going in for brilliant color-----, something like putting together jewelry or designing costumes. I take it so much to heart that I do not get on better with people in general.

Van Gogh by his very extremism and directness made all kinds of new painting seem possible. The Fauves, Picasso and Expressionists, owed a great deal to him.

FAUVISM:

In Paris, it was Louis Vauxcelles, the Parisian art critic, who during a visit to salon de'Automne in 1905, noticed a classic Florentine bronze, lost and overwhelmed among the richly colorful and flamboyantly non-traditional paintings of Matisse. The shocked critic exclaimed 'a Donatello caged among wild beasts'. That first major artistic movement of 20th Century, was a product of fusion of interests among a group of young painters; Matisse the leader of the group, Marquet, Manguin, Camoin, Derain and Vlaminck.

INFLUENCES:

- i) They liberated the constituent colors from the analytical function of Impressionism and made them into the constituent areas of a scheme that expressed light more broadly and freely. The function of their color was not to imitate but create light.
- ii) They admired greatly Seurat's and Signac's pointillism based on scientific researches as an expression of truth and their intensification of formalism but they did not follow their intellectual pre-occupations.
- iii) They extended the use of broad flat surfaces and application of pure brilliant colors, specially brick-red of Gauguin not to imitate but rather to transpose and rejected Gauguin's overly symbolic allusions.
- iv) Van Gogh's correlation between feeling and color and his desire to extract symbols from reality to find truth was impressive but they discontinued his sentimental components.

Van Gogh and Gauguin's dominant role of color and their emphasis on primary colors captured in flaming brush strokes, was converted into decorative arrangements.

- v) They used African art and sculpture for simplification of forms to reach abstractions.
- vi) Persian ceramics and Byzantine mosaics were additive elements for their artistic resources and with the help they created bold patterns and brilliant colors.
- vii) Japanese art taught them color's own existence and its own beauty not necessarily descriptive.
- viii) Russians lyrical primitivism also provided them the pure form and simplification.

With all these possibilities and prevalent trends, Fauvism became a spasmodic process of experiments. It was an expression of the joyful, vital explosion of feeling by young artists in love with world. They believed that nature had an inner as well an outer reality. To impose the inner upon the outer reality they used pure colors in broad, flat areas with simplified forms and outlines. They used light from color not from sun, therefore generated its own dynamic lively brightness.

As a parenthesis in the history of art, Fauvism's healthy reaction against the conventionality of 20th Century laid the ground work for all those who believed in exploring many possible uses of colors. German Expressionists were highly in debt to them for expressive harmonization of color.

MATISSE:

The great artists who made the transition from 19th Century to 20th Century, traveled a huge imaginative distance, none of these men covered a great distance than Henri Matisse.

To provide art the steadiest and most secure position, to make painting an escape from disturbances, he practiced through arbitrariness of pure color, applied intuitively and instinctively to achieve a bold decorative effect for expression. The use of unnatural and unconventional colors applied with recklessness, were essence of his style.

He practiced Cezanne's modulations and Gauguin's palette and decorative patterning. His paintings of sunflowers were clearly indicative of Van Gogh's 'sunflowers', which was painted after Monet's 'sunflowers'. His earlier-found Impressionism introduced him to pure colors as a separate touch, as a modern element of painting, color for color's sake. His visionary and analytical manipulation of paint

had its roots firmly planted in the poetic aspirations of Gauguin and in the quasi-scientific analysis of Seurat.

He sought light through the opposition of colors, placing color, against color and revealing an inherent light in the intervals and the interplay between them. Pink generated its own red contours and optical fluorescence made the line strongly graphic and mobile, were his own theories. The primitive brick-red lent from Gauguin liberated him for his arbitrariness. 'I use color in a completely arbitrary way to express myself', well defines Matisse's works. He was keen in depicting posture rather than resemblance, 'subjective idea is what I am after now, the rest can wait'. He was more interested in depicting gestures rather than exactness of structure.

For Matisse 'orange' evoked and reflected light with a unique directness; just as Turner took passion for yellows and oranges which had been rare in painting before; became his chosen subjects. For him, not structure but alone color remained the ultimate substance in art with which he heightened and vibrated the rectangular patches of juxtaposed patterns.

He created an ideal pictorial wholeness that eliminated the separateness of things. His fluent description of spontaneous fluid paint imply him at ease with surroundings because his ability never evolved in isolation: it was rooted in the resources of his time. In his decorative works, he wanted to create a tension-free art, used as a mental soother. 'Art should be something like a good armchair in which one rests from physical fatigue', that well defined his work, so the elimination of forms and purification of color was essential to his method. His real subject was not an action but a state of agreement between the physique of painting and its color.

His innovations were systematic and deliberate self-engrossment being realistic about him self. For him nature was always present, in the domestic, the sensuous, the exotic and in the themes of scattered untidy interiors.

The evolution of a painting by Matisse was thus a dialectical process, in which the individual component colors were constantly adjusted in relation to each other and to the whole, until a satisfactory internal pictorial coherence was reached. He advised his students 'you must be able to walk firmly on the ground before you start tight rope walking'.

'Distortion is present in a very general way in all arts. Even classical sculpture was distorted in the interests of the ideal, so the truth of a genius that distorts is higher than the truth of anatomy, and because in the presence of art, reality is only an optical illusion'.

EXPRESSIONISM:

Like all other modern movements it was also conceptual. It was a type of painting, sculpture or graphic art in which the artist tried through suggestive distortion of form, color and space to destroy the external reality of a given situation and got at its 'truth' or emotional essence. It was not descriptive or visual but analytical and internal, something discovered from objectivity and reality. Artist involved himself in it and thus identified with something more powerful than him.

Although all human action is expressive as all art is expressive of a situation in which artist works but some art is intended to move us and perhaps to give release to emotionally charged messages. Such art is expressionist. Although Expressionism as an art movement had been forceful in pre-war periods of 20th Century, in the form of two groups - The Bridge and Blue Riders in Germany, but expressionism as a general approach to art has not been limited. Throughout the history of art, expressionistic distortion of form and color has been the means by which artists have conveyed strong personal emotions.

INFLUENCES:

- i) The personal urgency that led Michelangelo into vehemence and compositional and figurative distortions.
- ii) Brughel, Bosch, Rembrandt, Goya, William Blake, Durer, Delacroix and Lautrec's works and Daumier's Caricatures.

IMMEDIATE INFLUENCES:

- i) **Edvard Munch:**
Most influential exponent, sensualized his impressions in painting and his psychological slant lent the exuberant line and fragmented colors their effectiveness. His frightening enigmatic paintings, his use of hallucinatory images gave 'public form' to his miseries. 'The dance of life', showed his rebellion against the brutality of earthly existence, with terrifying colors and tortured linear symbols, to evoke the power of the instinct.
- ii) **Gauguin:**
His violent but simple tonalities, an instinct for the primitive beauty influenced Expressionist to seek form outside the conventional art through strong colors.
- iii) **Van Gogh:**
With his tortured mysticism and twisted forms, he created a dramatic style, which he painted with expressive colors. His boldly constructed image behind the

optical reality of the surface, whose dimensions reached into the spheres of the spirit greatly influenced them.

iv) **Kathe Kollwitz:**

Her woodcut influenced them for their sharp contrasts without painterly tone value. Touched by the tragic unemployment of weavers, she created 'need', 'death', 'storm', and the graphic arts, expressed with horror.

v) 'Theory of Empathy' introduced by a great thinker Theodor Lipps, who believed in an art from which eliminated the boundaries between the observer and the object observed.

'When I observe a form I am within it' and Paul Klee's idea of 'taking a line for a walk'.

vi) Negro sculpture was a question of utilizing the brutal force and unspoiled qualities that they possessed, suited their temperaments as sources for inspirations.

vii) They adapted 'Fauvist' interest not for decorative, but for psychological interpretations.

viii) Germans exploited French Cubist influence only in term of form and took risks with Neo-Impressionist color stability.

ix) They greatly admired modern graphic works by Lautrec, Durer and Rembrandt (Lithographs and etchings)

As Goethe described 'the Germans really are a strange lot, they make life unnecessarily difficult for themselves by looking for deep thoughts and ideas every where and putting them into every thing'.

These modern Expressionists went for inspiration to the late gothic German artist Grune Wald and classical antiquity for simple and homely middle class emotionality. German Romanticists and Neo-Classicists worked for emotive and sentimental purposes; their emotionality was not only apparent in their subject matter but also in their technique. For emotionality religion took a major role.

TECHNIQUE OF PAINTING:

- Expressionism was not an artistic form but an attitude of mind, an outside demonstration of inner feeling.
- They created a new naturalness by penetrating into spiritual essence 'the instinctive', which they believed, was equal to knowledge. It was an art which

tried to depict not the objective facts of nature, but the subjective feelings of artist.

- The true innovation that modern Expressionists made was the discovery that abstract compositions could serve at best as effectively as subject pictures.

Expressionism was accepted more as an artistic achievement of individual than as a common style; the new status of color as pure expressive value enabled an artist to convey directly what he felt.

French Impressionists were realists, the Germans were idealists – they saw paint more in terms of it's emotional than it's chromatic value – the roll of color as the agent of expression, mood and emotion, was achieved by dynamic brushstrokes, producing brightness not from color but from the contrast of broken tones. Black was used as a color, no longer only for outlines.

The expressive quality of graphic techniques had been tested, specially woodcut more suited to express the restless movement of the current situation .

The versatile personalities of artists with their different styles in which they used their expressive technique as a 'common style', what bound them together was no more obvious than what divided them.

BRIDGE GROUP:

In Dresden 1905, a group of self taught artists, Fritz Bleyb, Kirchner, Heckel, Karl Schmidt, Pochstein and Emil Nolde, who believed in intellectual independence and self liberation , formed that group.

Painting was not more important to them than graphic media, specially wood cut, so their work reveal black and white poster-like style, with multiple reproductions of their prints, reached all over to a wide public. With addition of Japanese woodcut influence, and basic forms of Negro sculpture, their subject matter varied from horror, fear, alienation, street scenes, circus, cabaret shows and extended to drawing nudes quickly to grasp natural attitudes, with the models frequently changing their poses. These models were drawn in interiors and above all in landscape settings, as an only form of natural life.

They believed in immediate self-expression on the assumption that, that will readily communicate itself to the spectator. They wanted to convey a powerful feeling for life, confrontation of man with the world and making visible the inner forces. Color was not acquired in favour of purity of utterance.

The titles of pictures avoided references to names or personal attributes even in the cases of portraits, and related to circumstances instead.

BLUE RIDERS:

Another group of painters, Kandinsky, Franz Marc, Jawlensky and Paul Klee formed that group in 1912 in Munich.

Those artists tested their means and urges and gradually into a controllable language formulated their personal messages. They reduced naturalism and extended expressive power of glowing colors with fervent brush strokes depending less on subject matter. With their enriched vocabulary of form and intensified color, they declared that the work of art stood on an equal footing with nature and in its deepest inner most being had no connection with it. To perceive the inner reality, they applied purity of tonal layers for their personal expression. There was no subject and no color which mattered in the last analysis.

Blue was expressively used as the male principle, astringent and spiritual, to achieve new rhythm and to create decorative elements.

German artists of contradictory persuasions collaborated through associations and groups, moved freely between them, felt at liberty to change their allegiances and did not attach over much importance to their declarations of yesterday.

After world war II many artists disengaged their art from struggle for modernism and returned to comforting aesthetic traditions or naturalism in apposition to the supposedly obscure art of Expressionism. This was called 'New objectivity', the rejection of abstract art.

EMIL NOLDE:

He said 'Instinct is ten times greater than knowledge'. A typical Expressionist, joined 'the Bridge group' in 1906.

He admired Impressionist's works; impressed by Munch; highly influenced by Van Gogh and finally followed Gauguin for his inspirations. Gauguin's compositions of pure plans inspired by Japanese art, together with his contour drawing, and his use of pure color for symbolic purposes set the path for him.

HIS SUBJECTS:

The events of city life, its bustle and activity he recorded in paintings, surface-etching, drawing in brush and Indian ink, and mostly in woodcuts.

Themes in nature specially light and sea, he always recorded with energy. On the other hand he painted human-existence in primitive forms which he represented in more tensed terms in woodcuts. Taking visible reality as his starting point, he painted portraits, landscape and garden scenes. The original expression of human emotions was the main goal that he sought.

STYLE IN PARTICULAR:

He sought to connect the visual matter of art directly to the inner life of man. His abstraction was the tuning of pictorial means to the emotional or spiritual urge within the artist; his art thus would help people to recognize their own spiritual worlds.

Longing to depict profound religious and spiritual experiences with contemplative intensity, he worked from memory and vision. In his imaginative pictures he never used any model, believing that his preconceptions were far more beautiful to be used. There he called himself 'a copyist of the idea'. All he needed was a vague idea in terms of luminescence or color.

He stripped forms to simple elements and consolidated a high degree of coloristic deformation in large areas. To express fundamental sensations, he tried the art of the primitive people. He applied a rich complexity of color quickly with brush, his fingers and scraps of cards, achieving an intensified, expressive brilliance. Any one fascinated by charm of color was thrilled to see his paintings.

Artistic Climate of England at Anna Molka's Time:

Landscape painting was the chief artistic creation of 19th and 20th century in England (a home of romantic artists). But Constable's influence in England, which was the country of philosophical naturalism, was practically nil, whereas in France, it was immense. It induced Delacroix to repaint his 'massacre of scion' in a freer and more coloristic technique, influenced, Barbizon school, specially Theodore Rousseau, it was the static and not the dynamic of Constable that appealed to him. Corot shared his natural vision, but generalized the natural beauty instead of beautifying it like Constable. Daubigny also inspired by him, did not make landscape a self-expression as did Constable.

In the salon of 1840 in France, where Constable had been awarded a gold medal, thirty years later, Impressionists who were simple naturalistic painters before, their work, its strange that the same salon rejected consistently. Being the followers of Constable and specially Turner, why the fresh visions of Monet and Pissarro were an unpleasant shock for them?

Monet and Pissarro, the future leaders of Impressionism, during their stay in England, went for lasting inspiration to Turner's works. Van Gogh, another artist who

stayed in London for a while, for his job synthesized all the trends. Two artists of genius, one at the beginning of 19th century the other at the end, showed the landscape of fantasy still valid and potent subject; Painters of midnight sun, they were Turner and Van Gogh. Turner, considered to be the first modern painter; a romantic, used high keyed colors symbolic of its nature to gain immediate effect, highly influenced Monet and other Impressionists. So it was true to call him 'Father of Impressionists'.

Turner's pictures were exhibited annually in Royal Academy England without causing outbursts of various indignations, which were to greet the much more comprehensible productions of the Impressionists in 1867 in France. There might be, behind him the accumulated good will of his earlier pictures and the popularity of his engravings. As an acknowledged romantic he might be expected to do anything.

As the French Impressionists were greatly in debt to English painters for their influential contributions into their styles, as were the English artists to French Impressionists, to introduce them the even greater heights of landscape painting. By the middle of 20th century when, France, Germany and other parts of Europe were through and done with Impressionism, Post Impressionism, Fauvism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Dadaism and other abstract movements and were doing further experiments in modern trends, Impressionism had not yet become part of history in England and was still a living legend, Monet and English painters did not seem ever to have looked back; a constant forward thrust ran through their entire work. England was never been a place where completely non-objective or abstract ideas could grow properly, although a few artists experimented with Surrealistic and Fauvist ideas for a while. But it was Impressionism they never abandoned for their inspiration.

Anna Molka, born in England in 1917, stayed there upto 1939. As a student of Royal College of arts London, must have been aware of other contemporary English artists, possessing Impressionistic qualities in their styles.

Mc Neil Whistler, a vaguely Impressionist in technique, always painted out of door from life.

Mark Fisher, absorbed a few traits of Impressionism. It was the time when the eldest son of Pissarro came to England to live and work, which enhanced the influence of French Impressionism even more.

Wilson Steer, (1860-1942) studied from Paris, influenced a great deal. He used strong, brilliant color with great freedom and slashing brushwork with great imagination; they reveal artist's keen perception of atmospheric conditions and the movement of natural light across the landscape.

Richard Sickert, (1860-1942) studied from London and Paris, he met Degas, whose influence was considerable, especially in the subjects drawn from theater and

cabaret. That drama and vitality carried over into his landscapes. He preferred portraying the bustling activity of a crowded city instead of quiet existence of the country side. He used dark, subdued palette. His painting gleamed with light and wonderful atmospheric effects. His interest was in moments and situations. With his influence, English painters were instrumental in developing a strain of Post-Impressionism that was essentially English in spirit; contributing greatly to a rebirth of landscape painting in England.

With those prevalent influences Anna Molka had been aware of the famous French and German artists and movements of before world war II, through art galleries, magazines, exhibitions frequently held, medias of information and her own academic training in Royal College of Arts London. Her graphic arts of student life reflected great influences of Constable's, Turner's, Van Gogh's and Emil Nolde's graphic arts in terms of etching, engraving, woodcut, linocut, lithographs and pen & ink drawings.

'In a world where an individual is influenced, moulded and polished by the pressure of his fellowmen, the artist remains individualistic, where others are shaped, he grows'. These contents of training were like handling of paint to her as in hand writing it naturally acquired. A true painter rarely acquires a manner deliberately. It is part of him, a part of his manner and his bearing.

With all her academic training, so many great influences of contemporary English artists, with even greater influences of artists and movements of France before world war II, she left England in 1939 and settled in Pakistan for the rest of her life upto 1994.

Anna Molka in Pakistan:

Anna Molka, more than any one else, was a true founder of modern art movement in Pakistan. There were some artists who came later and built their own modern huts according to their respective abilities, upon the foundations she had established.

Rural landscape had been ignored for centuries in Pakistan, and that was the key reason why it became the leading area for stylistic and technical innovations. It secured popular affection than any other form of art in mid 40s. First time in the history of Pakistan, it was, she, who introduced people of this country, their own landscape. She grew up in an atmosphere where Impressionist painters were still highly admired, therefore following her earlier practice, endowing painting with quite a new series of color harmonies and vigorous brushstrokes, which had never been cultivated by local artists before. The effects thus explored by her were completely unfamiliar to the ordinary man, who was forced into looking at these pictures, to accept them as an artistic representation; something very remote from all his previous expectations.

When a few artists, still imitating and copying 'miniature painting', and many others highly influenced by European 'isms' were consciously destroying the standards and traditions, in which they lost their confidence in natural order; she created her own order of aesthetics by consistency of vision and painting directly from nature, by extending her easel in front of a landscape.

As Pissarro once said. "Happy are those who see beauty in modest spots, where others see nothing! Every thing is beautiful, the whole question lies in knowing how to interpret". A few among those 'happy ones' were Anna Molka and Khalid Iqbal, who sought to paint ordinary landscape of Punjab which was never painted before for its own sake.

It is not usually classic or academic, what makes an object piece of art, but it's the thoroughly human everyday aim of 'brightening things up'. Anna Molka shares this joyful, vital expression of brightening things up with the Impressionists and Fauves; who like her were in love with the world and believed that everything existed for everyone's delight and art could not proceed without it.

She embraced Islam at a very young age; impressed with the basic ideology of that religion, that it was not addressed to a specific nation of a particular area; but meant for the humanity all over. As an artist she compared the universality of Islam with the representation of light, air and sun, which either were not confined to one place but to the whole of earth. That mystical sense of the unity of creation provided her primary fascination with open air landscapes with Sun. For another reason, as she herself explained 'In London because of fog, mist and clouds, everything was grey. When I came here, the sun was everywhere. I loved to stand out in the sun to see bright-warm colors'.

This obsession with sun; Turner painted for the 'dynamic'; Monet presented it for its light effects on water and Van Gogh symbolized it for his emotionally charged compositions. As a foreigner, the drab and common place village scenes had an exotic charm for her. She heightened the colors so that the drab earth turned flaming orange and dusty trees became verdant green; the shadows were mauve and purple while the usual pale sky became bright blue.

Under Impressionism and Post Impressionism:

As the Impressionists were simple naturalistic painters before; like them she sought to revitalize the tradition of painting with a more direct response to nature and find a way of representing the brilliance of the light in the open air by raising the key of color applied in juxtaposed forms some what impressionistically.

Her art never evolved in isolation; it was rooted in the resources of her time; following Monet and then Van Gogh, she completely rejected Gauguin's attitude of

working from memory and imagination. With exaggerated natural shapes and rhythmic lines in the objects, she remained committed to work from nature; but her paints were animated with a mysterious quivering force.

Corot once instructed his pupils, "always the masses, the whole — that strikes you. Never loose the first impression which has moved you".

Anna Molka secured perfectly a focus and a balance over the whole composition; by ignoring mechanical details and summarizing the essential features of personality and environment thus created an ideal pictorial wholeness that eliminated the separateness.

Foliage of a tree was unified as a bulk or fragmented into illuminated touches. The structure of the human body called for a consistent elongated brushstrokes, capable at once of describing summarily and even brutally, the volumes of body with short enveloping brush strokes as Van Gogh did. Moving figures were made frozen, or made as the mind knew them to be. To sum up the main activity, she only depicted the appropriate gesture of a whole structure and made the entire work together through the equivalence of visual weights or densities of color in each area. This talent of creating simplification of form and spontaneity she shared with Monet.

She had a vision of fantastic world bathed in light and resplendent with beauty. Like Turner, her inwardness was combined with a fierce love of the energies of nature and the energies of paint on canvas. It was a world not of calm but of movement and not of simple harmonies but of dazzling combinations. She worked with such gusto and skill which gave us a conception of the grandeur of nature as Constable did. But unlike him she avoided to make these scenes into a self expression and recorded what she had witnessed.

She avoided night scenes and deep dark forest settings, choosing instead open air scenes. The fall of full light produced shadows at their shortest. These shadows also were reflective of light and barely darker in tone than sun lit parts. Her pictorial achievements through the method of distributing compositional elements was very close to Monet.

She had full command of perspective and ability to show varying distances and atmospheric harmony which were notable features of her work. The outdoor painting made conventional devices of working on one part at one time unnecessary, as it involved making constant adjustments over the entire canvas at the same time.

Under these influences; she painted portraits of Quaid-e-Azam, Khalid Iqbal and Moheni Najmi; her pastel drawings, i.e. 'Refugees'; her paintings 'the Music Lesson', 'The Mujahid' and specially her landscapes, 'Punjab University' and above all 'Punjab Landscape' (the biggest landscape ever painted on location)

FAUVE INFLUENCE:

It was the emotive power of a color for its own existence that struck her, rather than the imitative and symbolic idea behind it. She needed no more justification for painting the sheer visual pleasure of pure color which was now more fluid and animated.

Her landscapes were not merely records of the place around but encouraged the spectator to become aware of the bright pure color as modern element and a physical part of her painting. She applied her paints directly from the tube and looked at nature sometimes to forget it and painted the images mirrored in her own ardent, passionate soul.

Her forceful handling did not quite achieve its aim; one remained unsure whether the boldly stated wedge of paint constituted a forehead or a head. Like Matisse her evolution of painting was a dialectical process, in which the individual components; colors were constantly adjusted in relation to each other and to the whole, until a satisfactory internal pictorial coherence was reached.

She found the fleeting impression although vulnerable but her training had left her with a conviction that the process of conception had to pass through her analytical phase.

Her figurative compositions, 'The Bride', '10th Moharram' and 'Refugees from East Punjab 1947' were in fact records of bright pure colors as modern elements. Matisse's influence was obviously apparent.

EXPRESSIONISTIC QUALITIES:

Her art was one of the extremes but not of exaggeration; for exaggeration was not more than a short hand way of alluding to the extraordinary. She entered fully into the events themselves, with an internal cohesion to her compositions and her forceful impastos. All those traits were modeled on Van Gogh's style, in an instinctive way, which no longer had the least connection with the logic of Post-Impressionism.

She always drew inspiration from common life events. In her portraits of ordinary people, 'The blind man' (sculpture in plaster), 'the old man' (oil painting) and 'the fakir' (pastel drawing), her form took on an increasingly intensified external expressiveness of the inner content, although optical impressions continued to be the prime inspiration. Ordinary people were seldom presented as wretched objects but noble and heroic figures instead. She showed a preference for old people for her portraits, a very few of women and certainly none of pretty women.

She compensated for the nervous abruptness of her essentially large-scale mural like handling by a cleverly chosen, narrow scale of color. She took her paints directly from tubes and applied thickly with brush, knife, her thumb, fingers and palms thus

achieving an intensified expressive brilliance. She fully controlled the inner tensions, which had so deeply disturbed Edvard Much and had destroyed Van Gogh.

She did masterly drawings and large scale paintings, set down spontaneously and quickly with a very much developed, fully independent style in oil painting. Her predominant colors were yellows and purples or oranges and blues, appeared to shriek at a loud pitch to correspond with her outspoken stance.

According to Wolf-Dieter Dube 'one great truth, that there is no great, pure art without religion, that the more religious art has been, the more artistic it has been'. The finest expression of her art was witnessed in her religious paintings, 'Dance of death', 'Heaven', 'Hell' and 'Qiyamat'. She considered these paintings her last testament in art. Those paintings of her later style portrayed a great kinship with the works of Emil Nolde, for the interest of the 'spiritual'.

In those mural like religious compositions, she tended to spread her paint over the subject like a base, in a search for greater simplicity and density of expression. She pressed forward single mindedly to her goal of 'identifying the truth', and transforming nature by infusing it with one's own mind and spirit. That approach closely allied to Emil Nolde's.

There was probably no other local artist whose hand was directed to give tongue to one's talent. Her furious energies to hurl out her innermost being on the canvas and paper; a heart well acquainted with relentless driving needs and the intact rock like genius of her angular personality, bust open and was revealed to the fascinated gaze of the on looker.

Anna Molka was a competent draftsman and sculptor as well as painter. Her sculpting instinct made her more comfortable with the palette knife than with brush.

SELF EXPRESSION:

Whistler once said that 'he mixed his paints with his brains', in Germany they say, 'a man paints with his blood', similarly Anna Molka diluted her paints with her extra vigor. These phrases imply that the elements of a picture cohere by virtue of the personality which dominated direct emotional apprehension of the subject before him.

Her brushwork gave an air of excitement and urgency to the picture, which appeared as handwriting, a mirror of her personality and of her mood.

She was enthusiastic, impetuous and remained above all a person of ardent feelings; easily offended and uncompromising in her likes and dislikes; passionate and whole hearted in her friendship. Her hypersensitivity was coupled with an insatiable passion for work, amounting to an obsession, which never allowed her to rest for an

instant. She worked from morning to night all her life to ensure that the apparent spontaneity of the result should be thoroughly rehearsed. Her brush was never still, no matter where she was, at home, out in open or with a model in the studio. The natural force of impulse, (which she shares with Monet, Matisse, Van Gogh and Emil Nolde) had a special value for her and she cultivated it.

Her brushwork, knife impastos were the sincere and spontaneous devices, not as mere mannerism or studio exercise but for developing a personal, independent style of her own. If she had not presented true picture of her time through her art; she definitely had presented herself well and that makes for a true communication. She believed in the eternal values of art, established and refined over the centuries, and not art judged and evaluated by the market place.

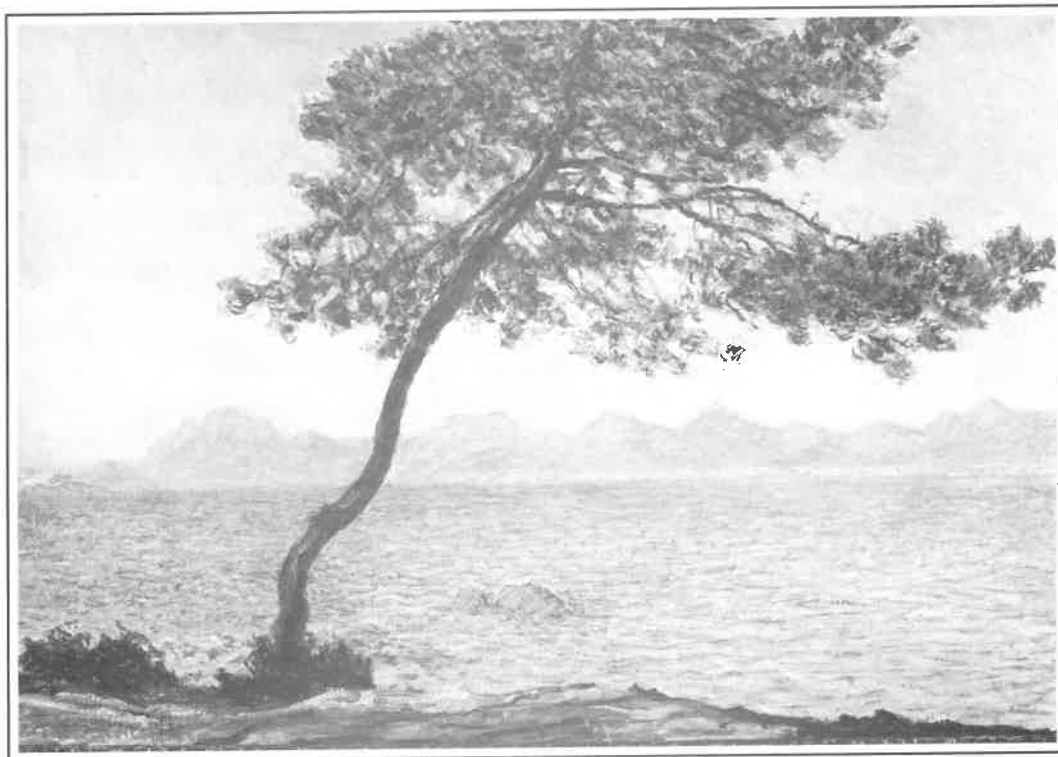
'A truly great work of art surpasses and survives the best or worst analysis'. Great achievements occur only when an artist has something original to say. Her brushstrokes were not an end in itself, but part and parcel of the creative process. 'Lots of our economic and scientific truths may look absurd centuries from now, but not the true work of art. The kind of dedication which is innate within doesn't change'.



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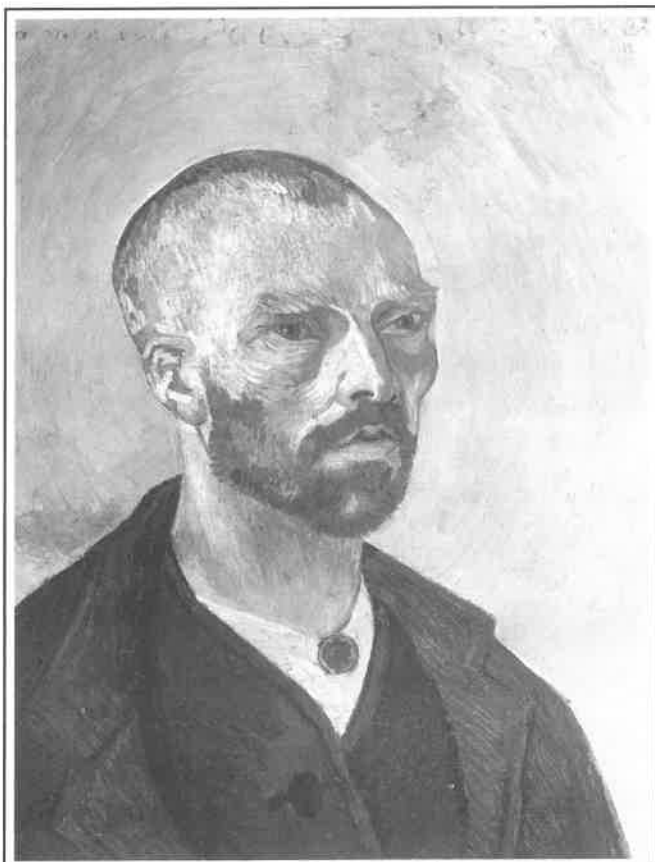
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Monet's 'Antibes' 1888



Anna Molka's 'Landscape' 1985



Vangogh's 'Self Portrait'



Anna Molka's 'Oldman'



Anna's 'The Bride' under Matisse's influence



Anna's 'The Lahori Gate' under Matisse's influence



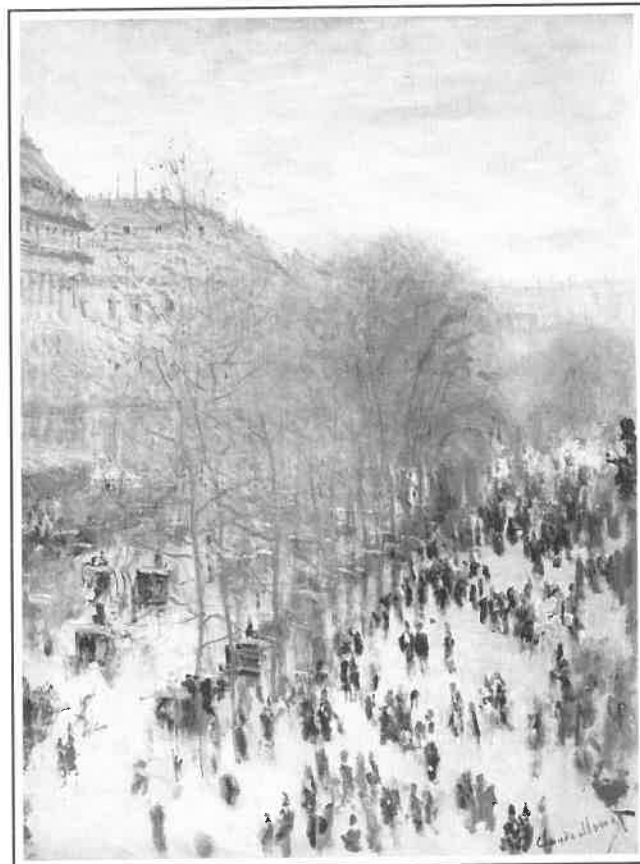
Anna's 'Punjab Landscape' 1973



Emil Nolde's 'In the Corn'



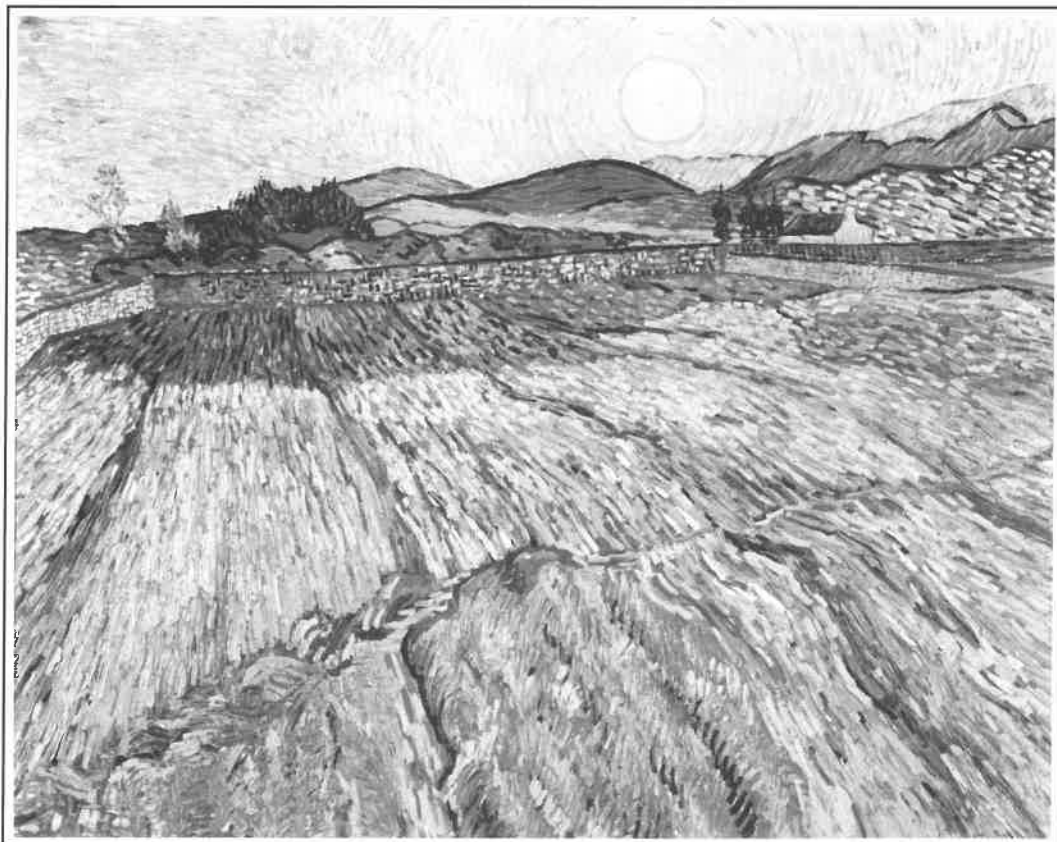
Anna's 'Refugees from East Punjab 1947'



Monet's 'Boulevard Des Capucines' 1883



Anna Molka's 'Qiyamat'



Van Gogh's 'Landscape with Ploughed Field'