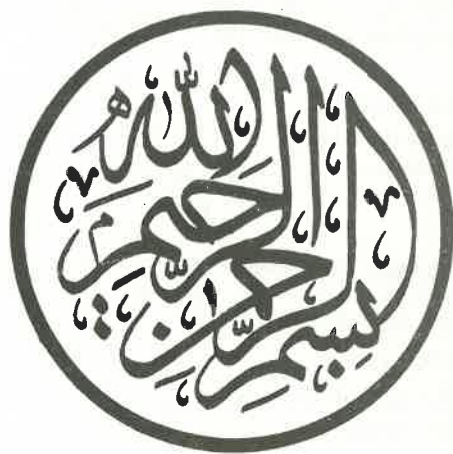


ANNA MOLKA AHMED



**AN
ARTIST
AN
INSTITUTION**



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ANNA MOLKA AHMED
AN ARTIST, AN INSTITUTION
by
S. AMJAD ALI

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Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan, Islamabad

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FOREWORD

This book has come into your hands probably some time before or after the fortieth anniversary of our independence, that is, 14 August, 1987.

Since the work of the artist presented in this book covers the entire period, its publication may be said to mark an important stage in our national life and in our art life.

Many of us would be reflecting on the path traversed so far and the degree of success or failure in achieving our goals.

There will be many different verdicts, depending on the point of view. Remember the definition of the optimist and the pessimist? Looking at the same glass of water, one says it is half full and other says it is half empty.

However, whatever the judgement people may pass on other departments of our life, there will be few who will deny that the progress in the arts has been phenomenal.

We can be proud not only of having produced a dozen outstanding artists but a large body of practitioners who are keeping the art scene simmering and bubbling.

Also it is a matter of deep satisfaction that the general public has begun taking so much interest in the arts, so that art exhibitions have become gala functions that attract the attention of the radio, T.V. and the press.

It is in response to this general interest that the Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan started publishing a series of small books in English on each of our notable artists. We were lucky to get the services of Mr. S. Amjad Ali, the eminent art critic of the daily "DAWN", to write for us books on Gulgee, Bashir Mirza, Mansoor Rahi and now this one on Anna Molka Ahmed.

We are proud to offer a perceptive study of an eminent Pakistani artist which we hope will help better understanding and appreciation of her work. Certainly, she has greater claim on our attention than anyone else because she has been painting in Pakistan and painting Pakistan for almost half a century.

Her enormous output in painting is not her only distinction; she has excelled in a variety of subjects and styles: landscape, portraiture, philosophical paintings, religious paintings, eschatological paintings (on heaven hell and resurrection), war paintings, partition paintings, besides a large body of noteworthy sculpture.

When on top of all this creative work is added her contribution to art education as a teacher of art and a maker of artists, then her total achievement becomes awesomely impressive.

Let this book be a small contribution to wider publicity of her great accomplishment. We wish we could produce a big volume commensurate with her work but if it is the sentiment that counts, then we assure the artist that our effort is inspired by the most cordial good wishes. May she keep her colours flying, with her brush.

Dr. Khalid Said Buft



QUAID - E - AZAM (5' x 8')

OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS

ANNA MOLKA AHMED

An Artist, An Institution

In Lahore and all over Pakistan, Anna Molka Ahmed's name is synonymous with art. She is the pioneer of art education in this region because she it was who started a Fine Arts Department in the Punjab University way back in 1940. During the 34 years that she headed the department and during later periods of contract service and part-time employment, which still continues, she has helped to educate and train hundreds of young women artists and some men, too, after the latter were allowed admission into the department. The result is that wherever one goes in the Punjab, the teachers of art in almost all schools and colleges are her students. Not only that; their work bears the clear mark of her influence in style. This is the result of the devotion and dedication that she brought to her role as a teacher and also the powerful personality which helped to mould the youthful talent that came under her influence.

Her work, however, was not confined to the classroom. She strove constantly for the promotion of art in every possible way at a time when art was not much in the air as was the case soon after independence when the few Hindu artists left Lahore and the Hindu buyers who bought paintings of religious subjects, and also others, migrated from the country.

Mrs. Ahmed used to arrange "All Punjab Art Exhibitions" in the Fine Arts Department, in which outsiders, both professionals and amateurs, were invited to enter paintings and sculpture. Prizes were awarded to the best entries. The catalogues of these exhibitions, which contain valuable biographical data and illustrations, are treasuries of information on the art activities of those times. She also arranged one-man shows for outstanding artists and wrote and published small booklets about them. Exhibitions of visiting foreign artists also were arranged by her to help the public to know what was being done in the world of art outside the country.

When objections began to be raised against the "misuse" of the funds of the department for promoting the work of outside artists, she joined hands with some other enlightened spirits of Lahore to start the Arts Council in 1948 which gradually took over the work of art promotion in the public. Mrs. Ahmad started evening art classes at the Pakistan Arts Council when Mr. Faiz Ahmad Faiz was its Secretary. The programme became very popular and continues till today, under other artists. Khalid Iqbal, Naseem Qazi and Colin David also joined hands with her and they are still on their jobs whereas Mrs Ahmad left the council in 1965. There used to be casual students in the department, too, but after these classes were started, the department discontinued the admission of casual students as that disturbed the discipline of the regular students.

With her keen interest in promoting art, it is unimaginable that she should have neglected the children. She started Sunday morning art classes for them at the Arts Council. She introduced modern methods of teaching art to children at the Cathedral School, the premier school of Lahore, and later did the same at a small village school, the Hanjarwal Village School on Multan Road, near Lahore. This last project was financed by the teachers of Seattle, U.S.A. In 1958, she published a beautifully illustrated brochure about the Cathedral School and Hanjarwal Projects. To train teachers who were later to teach children, she taught Arts and Crafts education which had been introduced in the curriculum of the teachers' training courses known as J.A.V., S.A.V. and B.T. She also helped to shape the syllabi of the primary and the middle schools of the Punjab as Member of the Committee set up for the purpose. By holding seminars, special art courses, workshops, giving lectures, drawing up schemes and syllabi, and gradually raising art education beyond the B.A. level to Post Graduate Diploma, then B.A. Honours and then M.A. Fine Arts, she helped the spread and rise of art education in the Punjab and the country, because nowhere else was it receiving the attention that it was in Lahore under the loving care of Mrs. Ahmed.

Her contribution to art education and promotion

would be enough to justify a place of honour for her in the world of art, but she has had the strength of character to combine all this hectic activity with the practice of painting and sculpture and the execution of hundreds of paintings, many of which adorn public and private collections in Pakistan and abroad. The enormous work she has done in the course of five decades is the subject of this small book.

BIOGRAPHICAL

Childhood

Anna was born on 13 August, 1917 in London, to a Polish mother and a Russian father who were both born in 1885. The mother had come to London as a baby of six months, wrapped in a shawl, from Poland, where most of her relations had been murdered. The father had come from southern Russia which he left at the age of 12 and after wandering over Europe, finally sought refuge in England. Both were fleeing the anti-Jewish pogroms that were rising in severity from year to year. Meeting in London, they married and she bore two sons and three daughters, of whom Anna was one.

From her childhood, Anna had a restless and enquiring mind. She felt dissatisfied with her life, her religion, and with all the world. Perhaps because of Central Asian blood in the veins of her father, she felt inside of her that she was an oriental although in life she was surrounded by all things Western. Judaism and Christianity did not seem to satisfy her soul. She used to frequent the meetings of the Indian Freedom League to gain access to oriental ideas. Islam appealed to her because it offered itself as the religion of all times and all the worlds. The God of Islam was not the god of any one tribe or nation but of all the worlds: *Rabb-ul-Alameen*.

Side by side with her deep interest in ideas of life and death, God and religion, she was also gifted with the creative impulse which sought expression in art. She was studying at the Godolphin and Latimer Girls' High School, Hammersmith, London, when she got the opportunity to compete for the Intermediate Scholarship in Fine Art offered by the London

County Council. Her father was opposed to the idea of art education for Anna as he wanted her to train in something more practical and profitable, but with the help of her mother she was able to bring him round and on winning the scholarship, she went to study painting, sculpture and design in the St. Martin School of Art, Charing Cross, London. Here she did exceptionally well and when the chance came to apply for a Senior Scholarship of Fine Art of the London Council, entitling the successful candidates to study at the Royal College of Art, she decided to apply. As her father would not hear of it, she forged his signatures on the application form and thus made her way to the Royal Art College. On completing her course here, she became an Associate of the Royal College (ARCA) in Design (not painting) and was also awarded certificates in Line Engraving, Lithography, Dry Point, Etching Aquatint and Wood Engraving which are all different graphic techniques for making prints.

It was while she was studying at the Royal Art College that she met Sheikh Ahmed who had stopped in London on the way from Detroit to his home in Amritsar, after a stay of thirteen years abroad. He had just completed a course in auto and aviation engineering and wanted to go home and practice what he had learnt when he fell ill. His stay in London was prolonged by his meeting with Anna, a most vivacious, talented and attractive young girl. The seeds of interest in art were already there in his mind and they sprouted as he basked in the favour of the young artist, Anna. Sheikh Ahmed decided to compete for the Senior Scholarship of Fine Art and became the first Asian to win it. He then joined the Central School of Art and Craft where he distinguished himself and later was given evening classes to teach. Because of his superb drawing, he excelled in etching and won the unique honour of being made a member of the Senefelder Club of which some of the leading artists of Europe were members. Anna's meeting with Sheikh blossomed into a romantic relationship. It was under his influence that she finally decided to embrace Islam at the age of eighteen.



SUFI GHULAM MUSTAFA TABBASUM (LATE)

(LIFE SIZE)

SCULPTURE IN PLASTER (COLOUR BRONZE)

Marriage and Migration

While these two young lovers were whispering sweet sounds into each other's ears, the world was overcast with the thick clouds of war which burst on 3 September, 1939, in the form of World War II. Not to be frustrated in their private plans, the two married on the 9th and set sail for India in the *Strathmore* on the 16th. On the boat, they made friends with Professor Siraj, who later became a famous professor of English, and Dr. Nazir Ahmed who was to head the Government College of Lahore, and some others.

They all landed in Bombay on 3 October with their new friends. There Professor Siraj entertained them and showed them all the sights. She was surprised to see such new fruits as the *Shareefa* (Custard Apple) and the *Cheeku* but she was greatly disturbed to see signs of blood spitting on the roads and was grieved to think that most of the people suffered from tuberculosis. However, she was relieved to be told that the red spots she saw on the road were signs of spitting by people who chewed pan or betel leaf, with its other ingredients of catechu and slaked lime.

She continued the journey with Sheikh Ahmed to his home town Amritsar and reached there on 5th of October. It was a big homecoming for him as he was returning after thirteen years. For the newly wed Mrs. Ahmed, however, it was the beginning of six months of confinement in *purdah* (seclusion) when she lived in the upper storey of the house. There was little communication between her and her mother-in-law as neither understood the other's language. Though everyone tried to entertain her, she found it hard to adjust to the new food and drink. The tea was too sweet. The pastries and confectioneries were thickly laced with green coloured grated cocoanut which she found difficulty in identifying. She was scared by the wasps which seemed to single her out for attack. It was decided to protect her from the wasps by laying the bedsteads of other family members on either side of her bedstead, for all slept on the roof under the open sky, which was a new experience for her. Once, when she and Sheikh Ahmed were going out to call on their friends, the Taseers, she was asked to stand in the street till Sheikh

Ahmed got a *tonga* (horse carriage) for her. But the sight that confronted her sent her into hysterical screams. What seemed like a herd of fierce bulls was making their way towards her. The people all rushed to her help but soon discovered that the cause of her scare was nothing more than a few cows that were ambling along the street as they used to do under the indulgent care of the Hindus for whom the cow is an object of veneration.

Taseer was then the principal of the M.A.O. College in Amritsar and he, too, had an English wife. They invited the new couple from England to come and live with them. The offer was gladly accepted and they began to live in more congenial surroundings. By and by, word got round of their presence and Mrs. Ahmed was invited to give talks on art from the radio station at Lahore. She recalls how she would go with Sheikh Ahmed to board the train in Amritsar and be received in Lahore by Sufi Tabassum, poet and professor of Persian.

Art Career Begins

One day a friend came on motor cycle and knocked on their door at midnight. He showed them an advertisement put out by the Punjab University for an art teacher. This was a gift from God and Mrs. Ahmed rushed to Lahore next day with Sheikh Ahmed. There she met the Registrar and later appeared for an interview and was selected for the post.

Thus began her eventful career as an art teacher in Lahore. There was no syllabus, no staff, no tables and chairs for the new art classes. Everything had to be improvised by the 22-year old art teacher. Since the prime mover of the idea of art classes was the Vice-Chancellor, Mian Afzal Husain, she got invaluable support from him. He wanted her to start M. A. classes in art but Mrs. Ahmed knew better and decided to go step by careful step. In drawing up the new syllabus, she decided not to follow the British pattern in which first theory was taught and the practicals followed. She chose the American system in which theory, practicals and history of art were all taught simultaneously, to maintain the interest of the students.

There was no art education in the schools and therefore even those who joined the first year for the Intermediate course in Fine Arts came without the necessary background. Few would join at all because it was a new subject. Mrs. Ahmed had to go to the colleges of the prospective students to persuade them and their parents that this was a valuable subject of study. In the course of her canvassing, she saw quite a bit of the city of Lahore and often lost her way in the centuries old crooked lanes.

Life in Lahore

While all this was going on at the professional level, she was living an exciting personal life in Lahore, with her husband and the many friends - B.A. Hashmi, Inspector of Schools, Sufi Tabassum, the professor and poet, Rashid Ahmed of Radio Pakistan, Taseer and others. For a time they lived with Rashid Ahmed opposite Lahore Radio Station and then got a first floor flat where Wapda House stands today.

It was an empty flat above the shops and Mrs. Ahmed had to provide everything from her meagre pay of Rs. 150 a month. They slept on the floor and used to hear the lions roar in the zoo right across the road.

Gradually she bought household goods: an old sofa for Rs.55 (she still has it) two cooking pots for Rs. 11.50, a durree for Rs. 20 and so on. She did not have the money to hire a tonga and used to walk to her place of work in the University. While on the way back, the kind vice-chancellor, Mian Afzal Husain, used to give her a lift in his car. Sheikh Ahmed did not share any responsibility for running the house and lived the carefree life of an artist.

But Mrs. Ahmed recalls that it was still fun. Some of the friends used to bring their lunch to their flat and they all shared and enjoyed and laughed. It was all like a club. Later, she and her husband shifted to Mason Road. It was only after Independence came that she got the present house on 32 A, Queen's Road, a ramshackle rundown evacuee property, which she rented and later bought.



THE BLIND MAN (LIFE SIZE)
SCULPTURE IN PLASTER (COLOUR BRONZE)

Professional Life

The Fine Arts Department gradually became popular with their students from the five colleges of Lahore except from Islamia College for Women. She recalls that in the first batch of her students was Nazratun Naeem and in the second group was Mrs. Anwar Afzal and so on. When independence came, there were two hundred girls studying in her department but of those only eighteen were Muslims. So when the Hindus and Sikhs all left Lahore, with the creation of Pakistan and the large scale exchange of population, she was left with a sadly depleted student body. Parents were unwilling to send daughters to art classes which they called un-Islamic. Some girls came in *burqa*. But gradually people became interested in art. Even the boys pressed for admission in what was till then a girls' preserve. It was only in 1956, however, that permission was given for boys to join the classes.

But before that happened, she had to contend against many odds. She had to get her proposals approved in the Academic Council of the Punjab University but her flaming enthusiasm was not matched by their cool and critical approach. Naturally, she felt frustrated and thought they were all ranged against her - so many philistines against the inspired artist! She would harangue them and sometimes even shout and leave the meeting, banging the door behind her. Crying, she would then go to Professor Wasti who used to console her and try to inculcate patience.

But, as some of the old employees of the Department recall, she was a person in a hurry, who wanted to get art education moving quickly. Any obstacle in the way aroused her ire and everyone was scared of an angry Mrs. Ahmed. She inspired strong love and hate. There was nothing neutral or lukewarm in her relationships.

In 1958, classes in M.A. Fine Arts were started. In 1960, 3 years course and B.A. Honours classes began, after which one year's study could lead to the M.A. degree. In 1964 she started professional courses for painters and graphic designers, leading to the degrees: D.F.A. Painting: B.F.A. Graphic Design: M.F.A. Painting and M.F.A. Graphic Design.

Separation

Every summer she and her husband went to the summer resorts in the hills, sometimes to Kashmir, sometime to Mussoori, sometimes to Simla, and after independence, to Murree, as this was the only hill station left in Pakistan. There she painted landscapes to her heart's content, using the furious manner of colour application called *Expressionist* that so suited her temperament. Niceties of drawing went overboard in the melee of colour. This was against the taste and temperament of Sheikh Ahmed who was above all a meticulous draughtsman, matchless in his own way. One day she found him standing and working on one of her landscapes, trying to correct the vertical and horizontal lines with the help of T-square and set square. She was beside herself with rage and flew at him with a kitchen knife when just at that moment Professor Hasan (one time principal of Commerce College, Lahore) came with his wife. They pacified Mrs. Ahmed with great difficulty and even when they left, stood outside for half an hour to make sure that the family row did not erupt again.

This is just an example that shows how oppressive she found the influence of Sheikh Ahmed and with the passage of time, her patience was running out. There were some other reasons too that need not be discussed here which made the conjugal relationships feeble to the point of breaking up. All this while, Mrs. Ahmed claims she was running the house and supporting the family with her earnings because Sheikh Ahmed lived the Bohemian life of an artist and shirked all responsibility. He got a job in Simla in the Government of India but chucked it up, and again did so when he got a job at Lahore in the Punjab Government. He worked for some time in the Mayo Art School of Lahore but could not adjust with the administration and left (as usual) without even collecting the salary due to him.

Under these circumstances, Mrs. Ahmed decided to separate in 1951. She spent nearly a year in England and returned with her father from London and he arranged a divorce. It was planned that he would live with her in Lahore but after a few months, he found the heat unbearable and went back to London.

Mrs. Ahmed has recorded in painting the feeling of being chained by constraints in her life with Sheikh Ahmed. The chains in the picture represent, as she explains, Sheikh Ahmed and the two daughters who were born to her. Then after separation, she painted pictures showing the sense of release and liberation. These were bright coloured landscapes and bold impasto work done with the palette knife.

Together with freedom, there came responsibility. She was all alone in the world with two small daughters to bring up. There were no relations. Only a few friends. She had to earn a living. She had to face the trials and tribulations of the world. Naturally, she had to learn to be strong and even hard when necessary. That was the necessity forced upon her by life. Her daughters Zarah and Tahira were her very life. She lived for them and gave them her love and protection. Anything that threatened or thwarted this protection aroused her like a tigress. Mrs. Anwar Afzal related an incident that illustrates this aspect of her life.

One summer afternoon she went to Mrs. Ahmed and was surprised to find that she was sitting at the boundary wall of her house with a hammer in her hand and pounding the wall with it, and wearing a grim look on her face. "As I walked up to her, she handed me also another hammer and asked me to do as she was doing. Later she explained that the servant of the neighbours always started cutting fuel wood for the kitchen and disturbing the quiet of the afternoon when her children were sleeping. Despite repeated requests, he would not desist as he said he needed fuel wood to prepare tea for his masters. Mrs. Ahmed then decided to teach them a lesson by disturbing them when it was time for them to rest. It worked and the wood cutting was done in the morning when the children were awake."

Thus years followed years and she continued to work, to bring up the children and also to paint. The meagre salary was hardly enough to support the family. The old house, which was evacuee property allotted to her, was in constant need of repairs. She sold her paintings but buyers were few and prices were low. Still, she knew no other art and toiled for survival.

The War

Then the September, 1965 war came when India suddenly and treacherously crossed the border at Lahore and Pakistan fought a gallant defensive war against tremendous odds. After three weeks, international intervention brought about a ceasefire and the world was amazed to see that the mighty Juggernaut of India's war machine was not able to overwhelm Pakistan.

However, the ravages of the war and the vandalism of the Indian army in the small pockets of villages occupied by them on the border, blighted and blackened the thousand mile long frontier. This was fit subject for the painter's brush and a group of artists was taken by the military authorities to see the tragic sights and paint them, if they felt like it. Many artists were moved to take up their brush and to create tragic memorials of those dark doings. Mrs. Ahmed also painted some of these scenes of pillage and pandemonium, but she went one step further and commemorated heroic actions fought by units of the Pakistan Army on various fronts.

Besides these, she also painted other historic scenes, most important of which is the Refugees coming from East Punjab to Pakistan, a 5 ft. by 10 ft. painting commissioned by the Punjab Government. Then two huge portraits of the Quaid-e-Azam and Dr. Mohammad Iqbal were also painted by her in size 5 ft. X 8 ft. and these adorn the Fazal Auditorium of the Punjab University, New Campus.

Tragedy

However, the year 1965 which brought the tragedy of the war and also its heroism, brought unrelieved personal tragedy for Mrs. Ahmed. Her elder daughter Zarah, who was a brilliant art student and had secured first position in the M.F.A. examination, eloped with a classfellow, Colin David, against the wishes of her mother and left Mrs. Ahmed heartbroken. She had high hopes for Zarah and wanted to send her abroad for higher studies in art and also wanted a better match for her. The shock of Zarah's rebellious action almost killed Mrs. Ahmed. She gave up painting landscapes

and the sunshine seemed to go out of her life. The incident also caused a big break in the artist circles, especially among the artists working in the Fine Arts Department of the Punjab University. Some teachers who supported Zarah and Colin decided to resign and they were given appointments in the National Art College of Lahore. The social gatherings also in which all the artists of Lahore used to mix and mingle freely came to an end and gave place to bitterness and tension. Artists were ranged against artists and the genial camaraderie of the past seemed to have vanished. Mrs. Ahmed painted an ominous painting foretelling the tragic end of this episode. In the picture the fair Zarah is dancing with the dark Colin on a dangerous path and as they approach a dense dark wood, the two figures seem to separate and poor Zarah is left alone and then is seen trudging forward with a small child, born to her.

This was Mrs. Ahmed's way of foretelling the tragic end of Zarah and this came true in 1980 when Colin started going around with another woman artist while Zarah was left to pine on her fate. Mrs. Ahmed added another small figure to the painting when Zarah bore a second child and increased the burden she was already carrying.

Mrs. Ahmed describes how she brooded over the tragedy for months and how she managed to come out of the blues one day when she had gone for a walk with a friend to Jinnah Gardens in Lahore. It was a bright spring morning and the sun was shining in the blue sky. She separated from her friend and walked up the small hill in the garden. On reaching the top, she paused and glanced down the hill at the vast garden that spread below and around her. It was a blaze of colour and the bright morning sun of spring made the colours vibrate and sing. The joyous spirit of nature filled her heart and lingering shadows of the past tragedy faded out, giving place to a sunny outlook on life. She felt a load fall from her shoulders and again the zest of life filled her. She started going outdoors with her paints and easel to paint sunny landscapes which she had not done for months.

Among the favourite subjects of her landscape painting is her own house as seen from the outside, with all its

lovely trees and bushes and flowering creepers. It was around this time also that she painted her magnificent landscape "The Flame of the Forest Tree in Jinnah Gardens" which is now hanging in the Arts Council, Lahore.

In 1971, again the clouds of war burst on Pakistan when India invaded East Pakistan and helped the secessionist movement there to create the new state of Bangladesh. Again some acts of heroism were performed on the borders of West Pakistan and Mrs. Ahmed felt called upon to commemorate them in paint. One such painting is "Action of Mahfooz at Kanjeri Pul, 1971" and another "A Landscape of Kanjeri Pul with the Fort in the Background". The painting "Action of Lt. Saeed Tiwana, Sitara-e-Juraat" which now hangs in the War Museum, also belongs to this period and Qaisar-ul-Hind was painted three times for the army.

Again, the war brought a personal disappointment and setback which threw the artist into deep dejection. In 1972, Mr. Z.A. Bhutto came to power as the new President of the country and began making sweeping changes many of which were poorly thought out. One of the half-baked "revolutionary" ideas was that the heads of departments in the Universities should change every year and all members of the department should hold the post by turns. Mrs. Ahmed had to give place to another colleague, a former student, and all the schemes that she had in mind and which she was in the process of implementing were stalled and stymied. It was most disappointing and frustrating. She developed insomnia and lived under great tension. This morbid state of mind found expression in strange puzzle pictures in which harsh angular lines and forms were drawn with livid contrasting colours and lurid images were conjured up, as if from the dreamworld. During the day she painted in her usual style and during the night found release by painting these strange abnormal pictures. Some of the pictures painted during this period of stress make an interesting study both as art and more so as expression of a state of mind. Gradually the mental turbulence and emotional turmoil subsided and she came back to her normal self. Gone were the nocturnal paintings, never to be repeated again.

Another three years passed and a still bigger shock came to her when she was retired at the age of 58 in 1975. She was at the zenith of her artistic and creative powers but the blindly applied rule of the administration swept her away from the position in which she was doing such useful work. She was recalled to work but again retired when she turned 60 in 1977. The retiring age had changed. In April, 1977 she was again employed on contract but released after only 5½ months. However, she continued to work as a part-time lecturer for the Semester Classes from 1977 to 1978, when she was retired for a third time. She was given the status of Professor Emeritus in 1983, which carries a small honorarium and was also allowed to retain a room in the Fine Art Department which she continues to use as a studio.

It was during this period of "retirement" that she did some of her finest and most ambitious paintings. She exhibited in the annual exhibitions of the newly formed Punjab Art Council of Lahore in 1976 and 1977, winning the First Prize in the last year. She painted in 1977 the two huge 5 ft. by 8 ft. portraits of Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal for the New Campus of the Punjab University Auditorium.

✓ Reflections on Life

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Mrs. Ahmed is not an artist who is merely the creature of sensations, whose mind simply mirrors the lights and colours and shapes of the outer world, but a deeply reflective person who often broods on the experience of life and comes up with her own personal conclusions and generalizations. Especially about her own life and the turns and twists that it has taken, she is full of questionings and anguished searching for causes and purposes and guiding forces, which often end in pessimistic fatalism.

About the strange fate that led her from London to Lahore, she enquires:

"Did I exercise my choice in coming here? When a plane crashes, do we exercise our choice? My father and brother and sisters and mother's relations lived in Poland. Many of them were murdered. Those who survived, escaped. I, one of their child-

ren, end up here in the far off city of Lahore and set up the Department of Fine Arts in the Punjab University. Who is pulling the strings and bringing about these accomplished facts or *fait accompli*?

"I was born with a restless soul. There was a feeling of deep dissatisfaction in me while living in the Western world for I felt that I was meant to be an Oriental. I was surrounded with Judaic and Christian culture and ideas, for my parents were Jews and two of my brothers embraced Christianity while a sister married a Christian. I reflected on these religions. They moved me deeply but I felt they were unfinished symphonies while Islam is a fully completed composition, which is a continuation and culmination of previous revelations. I started attending meetings where I could get more information about Islam. I was fascinated to learn that the Muslims pray to The Lord of all the Worlds, not just to the Lord of one world or one nation but of all the worlds and all times. This greatly appealed to me and I embraced Islam at the age of eighteen in 1935.

"In 1939, I married Sheikh Ahmed and came to live in Lahore. He came into my life only to bring me here and passed out of my life in 1951 when I divorced him. It was the will of God that I had to live without a husband or a son and with two daughters to bring up. So I had to be strong and could not behave like an effeminate woman. Here I was, a foreign woman in a strange land, with no relations, no friends. There was no husband and no son on whose arm I could lean. Tears were useless. I had to struggle and slog away against heavy odds. I was retired three times, first at the age of 58 in 1975; re-employed for 5½ months and again retired in August, 1977; and for the third time in 1978. Sometimes I quarrel with God for rubbing my nose in the dust but then faith prevails and peace returns and life continues.

"Now there is a breathless feeling. Hurry hurry. I must put down everything on canvas quickly. Time is running out. I am starved for paint. There are none in the market. Then some friends bring the paints. Like a famished person, I squeeze them out on the canvas and get down to painting with gusto. There are pictures I have to paint. There are feelings and ideas I have to express. Only three great canvases and then I am through with painting. I have to paint Heaven and Hell and *Qiyamat* (The Day of Resurrection) when we shall all stand before God's throne and be judged for the lives we lived on earth. I will say all this in paint and be done. Then I will turn to writing and finish my autobiography which I have been jotting down occasionally. And a book on Art in Pakistan from 1940 to 1985. This work done, I will bow out of the public scene. My contribution will be finished."

ANNA MOLKA'S OEUVRE

The oeuvre or body of art work produced by Anna Molka spans half a century, and luckily she has quite a large collection of her work dating back to her student days, which was being preserved by her sister Pearl in London and was recently sent to her in Pakistan. There are pen and ink sketches of faces and busts done in 1935, 1936, 1937 and 1938 when she was a student at the Royal College of Art. There is a full figure life drawing done in the class-room showing a turbaned man with a waistband, wearing *desi jooti* (olden Indian shoes) done in 1936. Most remarkable is a minutely detailed copy of a portrait of Queen Elizabeth I by Holbein. This and other work of her student days shows that she was an excellent draughtsman from the very beginning. There is an old sketch of Sheikh Ahmed when he was at the Central School of Art. She also made many cartoons and recalled that one she made of the poet Hafiz Jullundhri annoyed him for life. There are numerous woodcuts by her of student days, and wood engravings, aquatint, drypoint, copper engravings and linocut. She did wood engravings to illustrate the story-poem Yusuf Zuleikha by Jami. She also made title pages for Saadi's *Gulistan* and Omar Khayyam's

Rubaiyat and Firdausi's *Shah Nāmah* and much else, in an interesting new technique which combined the chance effects of marbling (*abri* work) and conscious drawing. This whole book could be taken up with a discussion of her early work of which she has masses preserved with her but this is enough to show that she was not only uncommonly gifted but nurtured her gift sedulously.

From 1940 she has made Pakistan her home and all these years, which cover almost half a century, she has been and still is, by the grace of God, extremely active and productive as an artist. About two hundred canvases and pieces of sculpture are with her, piled up to the ceiling in her studio on the top of her old dilapidated house in Lahore but many hundreds have been sold and are hanging in homes in Pakistan and abroad and also in many public offices and buildings in the country.

Her work can be grouped and discussed under the following headings: 1. Landscape. 2. Portraits. 3. Figure Paintings. 4. Large Compositions. 5. War Paintings 6. Philosophical and Religious Paintings. 7. Drawings. 8. Monumental Paintings.

Landscapes

Perhaps the most distinctive work of Anna Molka is her landscape painting. These contain the stamp of her personality more than any other category and this is also what has influenced her students greatly.

The distinctive quality of the landscapes is, first of all, their subject. She introduced the study of the rural scene in the painting of our country. Perhaps her approach as a foreigner had something to do with it. What to a resident of the country might have looked drab and commonplace had an exotic charm for her and she avidly painted the flat-roofed mud huts of the farmers, built in the midst of their fields and farms; the bullock walking round and round to turn the Persian wheel from which water is flowing into the adjoining farm, and many other such subjects which form the theme of her paintings.

No one had painted the rural landscape of Pakistan before. The Bengal School found numerous followers in Lahore in the 1940s, as a result of the presence of such artists in the city as Sen Gupta but they painted people and not scenes and landscapes: village maidens at the well or bathing in streams while their thin saris cling to their dimly visible bodies. Trees and streams and huts came secondarily into the composition. Sometimes they painted sunset and sunrise but these and other such landscapes were highly refined, poetical visions of rural life and the rural scene, and hardly representations.

Another eminent artist who celebrated the rural scene of Pakistan was Allah Bukhsh but again he was not so much interested in the view of villages and fields as in the life of the village folk of the Punjab, especially the colourful festivals and weddings and other such occasions which answered the artist's ideals of picturesqueness. He painted long processions of women and children and men going to a fair or a marriage and the entire emphasis was on the costumes and not on the character of the face or on the scenic background.

There are a large number of superb woodland scenes by Allah Bukhsh in which he has painted trees and clumps of trees at close range, emphasizing the tangled patterns of branches and the mysterious atmosphere of light and darkness playing on the trees but these again are not recognizable pictures of particular spots but simply glimpses of woodland scenes in the thick of the forest, more striking for the tangled skein of trunks and branches than for their descriptive quality.

Anna Molka introduced the painting of village life and the village scene as the exact record of a particular place. She took her students out to the countryside, taught them to see the beauty of the farms and fields and villages and of the people who inhabit them, and led them to paint it while doing so herself. This in itself was a contribution. At least, the young artists learnt to take notice of the scenes and the life spread right around them, and in preference to the street scenes of the city she led them to the country, which was no doubt the influence of the English artists who had

taught her and of English art on which she had been brought up. After all, England and Germany were the homes of the Romantic movement which taught people to notice and feel the charm of mountains and forests and rivers and fields and to sing and celebrate the beauties of nature in poems and paintings. The greatest and earliest landscape painters of Europe were the Englishmen, Constable and Turner, who later influenced the French Impressionists who in turn raised landscape painting to still greater heights.

Then there is the style she developed in landscape painting. It is neither the cold factual statement of Corot nor the dreamy twilight scenes of Millais nor the sad, socially and morally significant views of farmers and farm life that Millet paints, nor is it the mysterious vision of dark recesses of the forest or imaginatively worked up close-up views of trees and groves of trees with wondrous patterns of interwoven branches and an eerie other-worldly atmosphere that Allah Bukhsh used to paint.

No such thing in Anna Molka's landscapes. She takes a hard clear look at the villages and mud huts nestling in the midst of fields, with standing crops and of men, women and children working there.

It is another matter that she heightens the colours, for the drab earth turns flaming orange and the dusty trees become verdant sap green and the shadows are mauve and purple and the usual wan pale sky is bright blue, shot with green and purple and yellow and red.

She uses the palette of the Impressionists suitably modified to the colour of the surroundings in which she works. The Impressionists taught the use of bright colours in place of the dark colours of the old masters. They abandoned the outline and depicted objects by painting their lighted and shadow areas in contrasting colours, which means complementary colours such as green and red, orange and blue, yellow and mauve or purple. They taught that the shadows have the complementary colours of the object casting the shadow. They also gave up the exact and full and continuous representation of objects that was the normal

practice since time immemorial to a sketchy improvisation, a glancing view of the object or the scene and a casual and quick transfer of the view to the canvas.

All these features of the Impressionists are found in Anna Molka who was as fond of landscape painting as the Impressionists were. However, there are important differences. She uses black which the Impressionists eschewed. What is more important, the delicacy and minuteness of the Impressionists is replaced in her work by vigour, gusto, thick daubing of paint and use of high keyed, high value colours whose hues are deep and full. This impulsive energetic knifework has a marked emotional quality and expresses the strong feelings of the artist. Therefore, she calls herself an *Expressionist*. The term was specially used for the German artists who arose in 1905 as a group called *The Bridge* and flourished in the first two or three decades of this century. They were not landscape painters and were not celebrating the beauties of nature. Rather, they were deeply moved by the suffering and the decadence they saw around them and expressed their sorrow and rage in woodcuts, etchings and paintings in which dark colours, strong contrasts, exaggeration and distortion were used to express their pent up feelings. Hence the term Expressionist.

Anna Molka's work is far different from that of the Expressionists of Germany but it has a certain impulsive and agitated brushwork and strikingly variegated colours that all add up to a deeply emotional statement. This we know is thoroughly characteristic of Anna, the artist, who is a person of strong emotions, quick and deep reactions and acute sensibility.

Anna Molka is an outdoor painter of landscapes and her views on this subject are worth recording;

"When I paint in my studio, my subjects and my style are different. I use cool colours and sad philosophical subjects. When I paint outdoors, it is always in sunshine, never when it is overcast with dust or clouds. Then something strange happens to me. The sun takes me over. I get drunk with the sunshine. It

seems as if I have no will power. I use warm colours and bright colours — orange and Naples yellow and cerulean blue, olive green and some red. I work excitedly and furiously. If passersby, who always stop to watch, begin to interfere in my work, I get violently upset,

"The sun heightens the colours, throws strong shadows which are also bathed in the opposite complementary colours. It creates attractive highlights on the edges of objects and makes the view melt in the distance in a clear gradation of tones, instead of the flat undifferentiated evenness and softness that is found under clouded or dustladen overcast skies.

"I run mad. The sun glares at me, the wind lashes at me, the dust bites my eyes and the scene works me up. I can hardly wait to paint. I lay on the paint directly by squeezing the tubes on the canvas. Then, if it is a large canvas, I sometimes smear the paint with the palms of my hands or with my thumbs. Then after the broad areas of paint have been prepared, I work in the details with the palette knife, creating pairs of light and dark areas in each object and steadily diminish the colour value in the colours used in the distance. This toning-down of values is not done by thinning the paint or mixing white but by using other hues with low value (less light in them, as blue has lower value than yellow or red).

"In other words, I teach tonal painting but I do not practise it. I vary the colours instead of the tones. Yellows and oranges in lighted areas, blues and purples for the shadows. The quantity of colour also is varied. When I use orange or red or brown, I use more quantity in the foreground and less in the background. So the quantity of colour is varied, not the tone. I leave out the half-tones and make the contrasts violent, accentuated, dynamic. These contrasts were introduced by the Impressionists: yellow and mauve; red and green, orange and blue. The last one is my favourite because I feel this is the colour

of Pakistan. Here the dust is everywhere. When the sun falls on it, it turns yellow.

"The sun is a magician. It brings out the colour. When there is no sun, there is no colour. I am not interested in painting when the sky is overcast with dust or clouds. There is colour even in the shadows, as the Impressionists taught. The shadows are always in the complementary colour of the subject.

"In England, the land of my birth, everything is grey. The sky is clouded, the walls, the roads, the dresses, all are grey. When I came to Lahore, the sun was everywhere. I loved to stand out in the sun and drink in the sunshine and the bright colours. That is why I love to put these bright colours in my painting too. But now with age, the colours are fading out of my painting."

On the importance of design in a landscape, she said:

"I make my composition first and then make the landscape fit in. If you paint the scene exactly as it is, it will not be a piece of art. Take the example of my painting of the University building. When I started painting, it, it looked like an abstract painting because of the balanced division of areas. These divisions get covered up after painting but even now if you put a transparent paper on it and draw the outline of the objects and the shadows, look what you will get! It will be an abstract pattern. Design is in my blood. Even my shadows are designed, not only the basic structure of the picture."

On the difference between painting indoors and outdoors, she said:

"When painting a landscape out in the open. I am an Impressionist.

"When painting pictures indoors, I am an Expressionist. Outside, the sun dictates the theme. Inside,

the mind takes over. Outside, I am an extrovert, inside, an introvert. In the studio, I am agonized, tortured by my thoughts, my sorrows, my tragedies. Outside you move with the breeze, fly with the clouds. You become everything, the tree, the stream, the rock. The Greeks believed there were nymphs and dryads in every object of nature. When painting a landscape, you become a nymph or a dryad."

Another important aspect of her work is stressed by her when she says:

"I try to get the feeling that the object is alive and moving, quivering in the cool breeze, shimmering in the torrid sun."

There are no flat areas of colour in her work. Always there are daubs and dashes and streaks and stripes, smears and swipes of paint, pressed and moulded and gouged and grooved with the palette knife, making a thick surface churned up and roughly moulded, with pits and ridges. This is naturally marked by a thousand wriggling curves and lines, troughs and crests which catch the light and create visual turmoil and emotional excitement in the viewer. They also give a sculpturesque look to her work which is an important feature of her painting.

The element of movement, vibrancy, animation and agitation become an integral part of the scene in her landscapes. It is the projection of the worked up feelings of the artist that leads Anna Molka to call herself an Expressionist. Of course, her subjects are neither as mystical as the Starry Sky of Van Gogh nor so full of moral indignation as the work of the German Expressionists but it is a way of painting the common rural landscape in an emotional and exciting way.

It must be pointed out that her understanding and rendering of the form and structure of trees and their foliage is extremely weak. The foliage of every tree in nature falls into distinctive patterns and every artist has his own way of rendering the foliage and the pattern or design into which

it falls or into which he moulds, it. In Anna Molka we find often only a rough sprinkling of dots of different colours or patches and daubs of different shades of green with yellow for the highlights and brown and deep purple for the shadows. Even if the three dimensional structure of the tree does not emerge, at least the flat form of the tree should take shape with the sum total of strokes. Unfortunately this is not the case. The trees remain mere signs and symbols of trees and the brush strokes chaotic, formless and barely suggestive of a tree. Even the distant views of trees, which are much easier to depict, lack verisimilitude, as can be seen in the painting of Murree. There is not even a vague suggestion of the distinctive form of pines and firs which make up the woodland scenes of Murree. Nor are the near trees any better although they are depicted in the round by her and have a light and dark side.

The plea that this is Expressionist painting and therefore it is wrong to demand any resemblance in the forms of trees, is hardly valid when it can be seen that trees have clearly recognizable shapes in the landscapes of Van Gogh who is the nearest parallel of an Expressionist painter of landscapes. His Cornfield with Cypress shows a cypress which is perfectly recognizable although it is painted writhing and twisting as a result of the Expressionist stress of feelings and resulting distortion.

✓ The success of the landscapes of Anna Molka lies in maintaining the same distinctive palette or set of colours all over the painting and in keeping the light value or pitch of the colours fairly uniform and gently modulated so that one colour does not jump out of the picture because of its high key. Jinnah Bagh (Jinnah Garden) (20" X 26") is not her best landscape but it is typical of her work because it exaggerates her style. The garden turns into squirts and sprays and whirls and cascades of colour. The trees look like fireworks and the ground like a colourful carpet, and the sky like heaven itself. Anna Molka said she thought this painting would look fine in a child's room. But there is this element of childlike exuberance of colour and style in all of her paintings, not to this extent but present nevertheless.



CHOTA DERGAI (4' x 6')

(14 MILES FROM SHAHDARA)

OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS



REFUGEES FROM EAST PUNJAB 1947 (5'x10')

OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS

The biggest and best landscape she has done so far is Punjab Village (4' X 6') which she claims is the biggest landscape ever painted outdoors on location. It may be recalled that the Impressionists, who started the practice of outdoor painting (Plain air painting) painted the landscapes small for the simple reason that it was not practical to carry a large canvas on a stretcher to the location and to hold it up in the wind to paint. Anna Molka speaks lovingly of the Punjabi village boys who fuss around her and enjoy helping her in her work, just for the love of it.

In this painting a vast scene has been masterfully controlled both as regards the colours and as regards the composition. The huge haystack on the left and the huts on the right have some structure and solidity and they anchor the picture in the middle distance. In the foreground the ripe standing crop of tall green plants has been shown with sufficient clarity to indicate row behind row, while in the distance, on the horizon, the small trees and small huts melt away in the sky. One or two figures vaguely treated, but with suitable light effects on the near one, enliven the landscape while their red garments contrast with the green verdure. It is in the sky, however, that the artist lets herself go. Great cloud formations sweep diagonally across the sky in a swirl of white, yellow and blue and mauve. The sun in pale or very light red is sculpturesquely moulded and enveloped in a blaze of yellowish and pale green light.

The Murree landscape, with its vast medley of roof tops covering the sprawling hills in the scene, is a masterpiece of organisation. In the foreground is a balcony which by contrast gives distance to the rest of the scene. Far off, the forest-covered diagonal hills on right and left hold up and frame the picture and give it structure.

"The Punjab University" (3' X 6') is another excellent study of a large building framed within a thick cluster of trees in a broad view. There are no deep shadows on the dark side of the building and the difference of tone is very slight between the lighted and the dark side. The building was painted brick red and so the reddish colour is plausible and it serves the purpose of the artist in providing brilliant bright

colour which is well contrasted with the green of the surrounding trees. The stretch of lawn in the middle has very attractive chequered effects, not depicting flickering shadows but just the vibrations of light and colour seen or created by the artist through fine stippling or fine streaks of yellow and orange and green. The weakest part is the overhanging branches of the trees on top right and the masses of trees on the left. At top right a sprinkle of light and dark green and blue and some red and yellow dots have been showered to serve as trees and on the left a mass of green paint has been lumped to pass for trees. The row of clipped round lime trees in the middle look very crude and stiff.

 The many pictures painted lovingly of her own old house in Lahore have no doubt sentimental value for the painter but the main interest of the picture for the common viewer is the bougainvillea creepers and the other plants and shrubs painted in a flurry of disjointed daubs and blotches of paint which do not fuse together into convincing forms although they have a lively animated air about them.

Another sentimental but very successful picture of her home is the one in which a child (her grand-daughter Zeri) stands in the middle with a discreetly, smoothly painted face on which appealing highlights are playing, and all around whom is a large array of diverse plants and bushes and trees, all carefully and continuously drawn, not disjointedly and sketchily and casually as in most other cases. Worthy of note is the fact that the artist has painted this picture with a brush and not with a painting knife which she uses normally. It is like an ode or a love poem in paint presenting a fairy like child in the paradisaal setting of a garden landscape. The variety of plant shapes provide changing patterns and forms that have been artfully integrated in a satisfying whole.

Portraits

Another major category of her work is portraits. She must have painted scores of portraits in her life and many of these were commissioned work and therefore taken away by the sitter. Many others too were sold and thus lost to the artist. However, luckily, still she has a score or so of portraits with her which give a fairly good idea of her work.

Many of these are portraits of well known artists and writers and scholars but many more are pictures of humble peasants, and other common people whose face attracted her by some quality of character that she saw in it. At the other end, there are portraits of national heroes, like the Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, and the poet Iqbal and the pioneer Rahmat Ali, who gave Pakistan a name.

Stylistically, there are two opposite poles. One is represented by the carefully drawn and cautiously coloured portrait of Professor Muhammad Shāfi. It is dated 1952 and shows her early style in which the emphasis is on drawing; the paint is evenly and thinly spread with the brush, and the tones gently modulated within a narrow range of flesh tints, with no prismatic fireworks, as later on. The outline and the features are very firmly and surely delineated and the modelling in three dimensions is very sculpturesque. At the opposite pole is the portrait of Shafiq Farooqui in which the painting is done in thick impasto with the palette knife. The highlighted area is flaming orange and the shadows cerulean blue with light yellowish orange in the middle tones and a little burnt sienna in the darkest areas.

The obviously energetic application of paint with the palette knife creates curving and wriggling movements on the surface that enliven the picture and make it vibrate.

The whole emphasis is on translating the light effects in terms of forceful strident colours and not so much on meticulous drawing of features or on showing the solidity of the structure of the head. And yet with this extremely rough and frenzied treatment, she has been able to catch the exact character of the face while at the same time building a pattern of colour whose parts hold together in perfect balance and tonal harmony.

A still further exaggeration and distortion, which fully deserves the epithet of Expressionist, is the picture entitled "Why?" It cannot be called a portrait because it is not meant to catch the resemblance of a face but to convey



OLD MAN (20" x 26")
OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS

a certain mood of dismay and despair. This is very near the German Expressionists who painted the deep suffering and despair of the first two decades of this century. The deeply wrinkled face and furrowed forehead is depicted with long streaks and stripes of paint in almost caricature form. The wide open round eyes and raised eyebrows are almost like a diagram of dismay. The face is painted light blue and white and there are orange highlights above and below the eyes giving it a ghoulish look. It certainly puts across the message forcefully.

She has painted a number of self-portraits which reveal her style and approach in portrait painting. The earliest is the 1952 self-portrait in European dress. It shows a young and pretty face, ruddy with health, on which light is falling from the side over the left shoulder of the picture. Therefore, the top of the shoulder and the side of the cheek is lighted and the front of the face slightly shadowed so that even the front of the nose is shown in dark hues. The dark hue in this case, both on the nose and front of the cheeks is a dark tint of red and bluish-red (purple), while the light area is a very yellowish tint of red or yellow with just a tinge of red. Because red has a lower value (less light) than yellow, it is used for the area in shadow and purple for still darker ones.

The application of the colour is in broad layers which are fairly smooth on the cheek but roughed up on the forehead, neck and breast. There is no attempt to create attractive highlights on the mass of dark hair falling on the shoulder as they serve to set off the pretty face without further adornment.

There is a look of cool confidence but just a tinge of wonder at what the future holds for her. This portrait was made soon after she went to London and got her divorce from Sheikh Ahmed and won her freedom, just as resolutely as she got married to him against the wishes of her father. Though free, she was in the strange position of being a woman all alone in a foreign land, with no relations and very few friends but carrying the onerous responsibility of bringing up two small daughters.

Another self-portrait dating from the year 1980 shows her in a black mood. The beetling brows cast heavy shadows on the eyes, the lips are tilted in a scowl, the eyes look down and sideways, half closed, and the head is placed haughtily on the heavy shoulders which are turned away from the onlooker.

The treatment matches the mood. Rough strokes sweep down diagonally on either side of the nose, to show the front face. Other thick strokes sweep down at right angles on the side of the face, the cheek, and a dark ridge divides the two along the cheek bone. The cheek bone on the far side also is made prominent and the whole face has an angularity which is reinforced by the rectangular bookshelf in the background.

The colours used on the face are a dark red, streaked with pale red or white. There is none of that rosy red that is prominent in the 1952 self-portrait. The dress is yellow ochre with dark shadows.

A very different self-portrait, also painted in the 80s, is the one in which she is wearing dark framed glasses. A smile plays on the lips and eyes. The face has soft rounded contours. It is rendered in light rosy flesh tints, with light purple shadows under the eyes, the nose and the chin. The whole face is bathed in a diffused light whose source is not very clear. The pigment is laid fairly smooth and the scraping with the palette knife is in small and gentle strokes. An attractive highlight plays on the edge of the far end of the face and on the nose. Even the area under the eyebrows above the eyes is in light. The bobbed hair are grey but have been embellished with highlights. The light also plays on the shoulders and illuminates the blue dress, on either side of the face. Further adornment is added by the green scarf whose colour cascades down the neck on either side. It is as idealized and beautified a picture as one could wish for.

No other portrait is so lovingly and decoratively painted. Usually she plays a strong light on the face from the side somewhere high up, as in the case of the portrait of Khalid Iqbal, creating very heavy shadows under the eyes, the

cheeks, the nose and the chin but of course it throws up prominently the structure of the face, although it is not very flattering to the sitter.

In the case of common people she takes greater liberties, as in the case of the old man with lowered chin and a leering smile painted in bright red and orange with some yellow in the lighted area. The exaggerated smile and the sunken cheeks tapering down to a thin bearded chin, makes it somewhat of a caricature.

Sometimes the effect of the strong light is almost theatrical, as if coming from the footlights below, as in the case of the painting entitled "Light from the Quran". This is not a portrait really but a face used in a subject painting, the theme being the moving message of the Quran which brings tears to the eyes of the reader. However, the lurid lighting from below hardly helps and the expression on the face, with upraised eyes, does not impress as very apt.

In quite another class are the portraits of the famous and the great, like the Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah and the poet Iqbal. Anna Molka has painted about a score of portraits of the Quaid in all moods, from the smiling to the grim, from the informal to the stiffly official. The most ambitious of these is the 5' X 8' picture which hangs in the New Campus Auditorium of the Punjab University. As usual, a strong light is playing from behind top left and casting heavy shadows in front of the full-length picture but the face somehow is still covered with diffused light. The face has neither the resemblance nor the character of the Quaid. Neither the gait nor the posture nor the gestures are typical of him.

The painting of Iqbal with a high black cap shows a man with a stolid swollen face and a gaze that lacks intelligence and even life. It is a heavy-handed work which emphasizes the corporeal aspect of the subject to the exclusion of any intellectual or spiritual quality. It is quite possible that the photograph on which the painting is based did not have these qualities but this is no valid excuse. We can accept anything as possible in nature while in art we will accept only the plausible.



THE BRIDE (3' x 3½')
OIL PAINTING ON HARDBOARD

Figure Paintings

After the portraits, there is a group of figure paintings with some subject. They have one or two main figures and some other quite subordinate ones. In this group there are "The Mujahid", "The Bridge", "The Shaheed", "Refugees 1947", "Punjabi Farmer" and others. Here one can take the measure of the artist as a figure artist. Undoubtedly the most successful of these is the Mujahid in which the full human figure has been drawn and painted very ably. Obviously, only the face and hands and forearms are visible and the rest is covered with a loose shirt and baggy trousers through which the body is hardly indicated except at the shoulders. Anyway, the face has been painted in a very difficult position as it is uplifted and foreshortened. As always in Anna Molka, a strong light falls on the figure from one side, markedly enlivening the painting. The expression in the eyes also is appropriate showing the dedication of the soldier to a noble cause. The upraised arms, invoking God for help, would have been better if the palms of the hands were open as that is the way in which the Muslims pray to God or address God. The clenched fist and raised hands could have been a symbol of grim determination but that is not indicated by the eyes nor are the hands really clenched but only lightly folded, both in the case of the hand holding the gun and the other empty hand.

Anyway, this is a minor fault, although it does detract from the effect the artist seeks to convey to the Muslim viewer. But she provided a wonderfully apt background for the figure, with the mother and father on either side, watching their son setting out on a crusade. The hills of Kashmir in the background and the crowds of people sitting there also help to create the atmosphere of national crisis out of which the call for self-sacrifice and crusade arises.

✓ Another full figure painting is "The Punjabi Farmer" in which he is shown working in a sugar cane field and cutting the cane while a side view of the figure of his wife is shown on one side, only half the figure appearing on the canvas. The artist explains that the red dress of the woman and gold pendant in the ear indicate that she is a newly wed bride.

The picture is well composed and the peasant has been centrally placed while his bride is placed on a side, the purpose being to show the emotional reaction of the peasant, which is depicted on his face. The expression however, is one of a startled gaze rather than of love. The head of the peasant is rather small for his stature and the whole figure seems tilted backwards, foot forward and head back. There is little to comment on the style of the painting except that bright yellows, greens and reds have been used. A strong light plays on the figures and the field of sugar cane. The colour treatment is very simple, rough and bold. There is no sign of any Expressionism here, a quality claimed by the artist.

✓ "The Bride" is another figure composition in which unfamiliarity with Pakistani life has made the artist provide a strange setting for the bride. She is shown sitting in a corner of some old palace but in the verandah or courtyard rather than inside some residential area or a room. Only two ladies are sitting with her and the others are wandering here and there while a man wearing a cloak is entering the courtyard. He is supposed to be the Qazi or priest who will perform the marriage ceremony. But at the moment when the Qazi comes, all the guests are supposed to be seated, the men and women separately, or even if together, then in some suitable seating area which is not shown here, rather, only stray figures standing here and there.

✓ Apart from the implausibility of the whole scene, there is nothing worth mentioning in the painting style except that a rough drawing of the figure has been made and painted. The expression on the face again is very lifeless and doll-like, although it indicates sadness, which is customary in Pakistani brides, and nervousness, the way she is shown clutching her dress and holding the hand of her companion. There is no characterization in the face nor any special light effect nor any colour effect except a uniform flesh tint or light red on the face. The usual red bridal dress of the Pakistani bride has been well depicted, with all its golden trimming. It is just another illustration of a subject, not a work of art with creation of form and rendering of light effects or special colour effects.

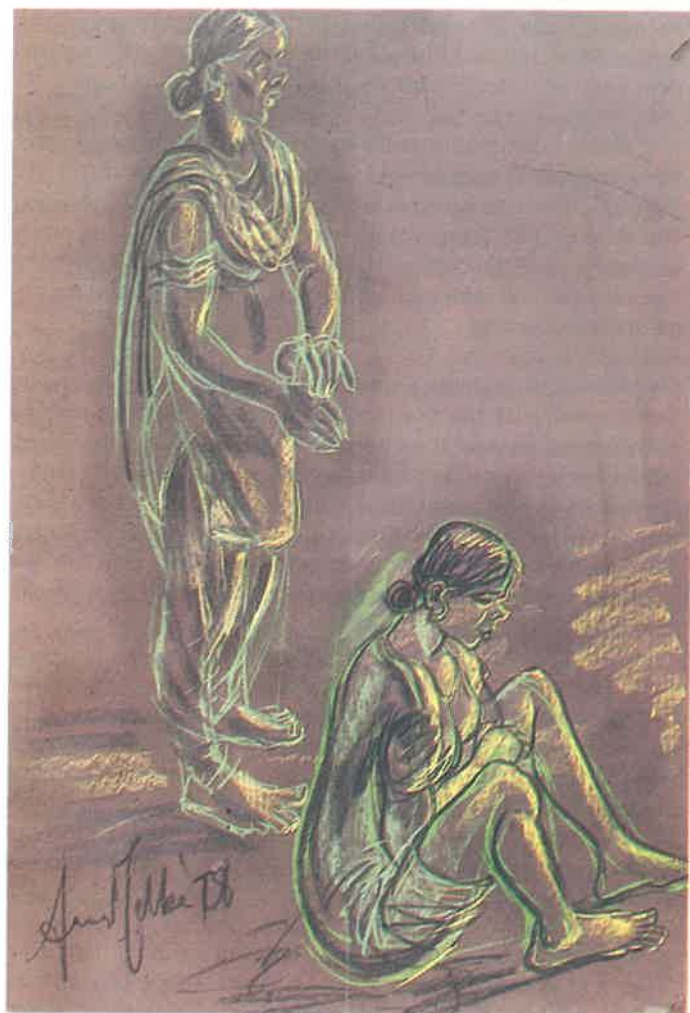
✓✓✓ "The Music Lesson" is more of a painting and an art work because here the two figures of the music master and the girl playing the Sitar, are painted as broad areas in an overall design of the picture which has many other such areas in the background, all rectangular, such as the mirrors, at the back, the window on the left and the cupboard on the right and also the raised settee in the centre and foreground. The long shaft of the Sitar and the circles and ovals of the drums also contribute to the design. Here the picture does not remain merely an illustration of a theme but a design in paint in which human figures have a place, together with geometrical shapes and the more free and flowing shapes of the drapery. The colour scheme also helps to build up the design. with bluish purple in the background mirrors and deep blue in the foreground on the centre settee. The centre stage is held by the greenish yellow dress of the girl and the bluish white of the man, each emphasized further by other similar areas on the left and right. Here one does not quarrel with the details of the figure drawing and painting because these are subordinate to the overall linear and colour design of the picture which produces the main aesthetic effect. It is an additional merit that the figures are well painted as far as drawing goes and the colour also is rough but aptly and effectively applied.

Large Compositions

In a class by themselves are big figure compositions in which the artist organizes together a large number of figures and many background features of landscape and buildings into an effective whole, a telling unity. This requires great maturity in the artist because the problem is not merely of depicting a number of figures adequately but of subordinating the less important to the important ones and leading the eye to a central point of interest, after it has wandered in a multiplicity of detail. The linear patterns, the distribution of areas and the colour relationships have to cohere and harmonize.

Refugees

Perhaps the most ambitious composition that Anna Molka has attempted is the 5 ft. by 10 ft. "Refugees" which shows the great Partition migration from East Punjab to Pakistan.



REFUGEES (20" x 30")

PASTEL DRAWING

A vast concourse is shown moving forward and order is imposed on it all by making it stream towards some bright buildings in the distance at top left, which is the goal, the Promised Land of the migrants. Right above this place, the sun is rising but is hidden behind luminous clouds, resplendent with the colours of the sunrise, the symbol of hope.

Men, women and children on foot, on horseback and in bullock carts are shown moving to a distant point in the top right. The perspective is emphasized not only by making the lines of men converge at top left, in diminishing sizes, according to distance, but the radiant morning sun casts long shadows behind each figure, which further reinforces the perspective design.

One can perhaps concede that the artist is following the teachings of the Impressionists and is therefore making the shadows colourful and bright like the figures themselves, as if they were reflections in water, but it taxes one's credulity when the backs of all the figures which face the viewer are painted so clear and bright. However, one has to accept the make-belief convention established by the artist in the picture, otherwise all the figures would have been in silhouette.

The whole painting is suffused with light. The ground in the foreground is bright orange streaked with purple while in the middle and far distance, it is golden yellow. All the figures are bathed in light, even on the side away from the light. The sky is bright azure blue and at the top left a huge fire is blazing crimson red, awful reminder of the loot and arson that marked the great upheaval of the Partition. As the huge flames taper off across the sky to the right, they turn into a thick flight of birds making their way towards the same radiant goal to which the people are wending their way. This and another symbolic touch is the single blasted tree that is visible in the whole vast plain in which uprooted humanity wanders shelterless.

To fill such a vast scene with figures must have taxed all the ingenuity of the artist and these numerous figures in the near and middle distance are fairly well and plausibly

placed in small family groups, poorly clad and some half naked, carrying bundles of their belongings on their backs or heads. In the distance are lightly suggested crowds camping or moving forward on foot or on bullock cart. There is a prominent bullock cart in the foreground and many others in the background. An interesting touch of real life is a horse rearing and tilting back the heavily loaded cart he is drawing.

This was with regard to the subject which may be wonderful but it is the execution that makes or mars a painting. As remarked above, the composition of such a multitudinous scene has been very masterfully achieved, making it look real and yet fulfilling the demands of artistic organization. The perspective is excellent. The figure drawing is passable and barely suggestive, except for the man, woman and child in the foreground who are painted in some detail. The horses, shown in this difficult aerial perspective from one side, do not look very plausible. Any lightly brushed in patches of colour can be taken as a human figure but the same cavalier treatment cannot easily pass muster in painting a horse because it has a complex anatomy.

Anyway, the fact is that this, like all other paintings of Anna Molka, is a colouristic creation and should be judged for the play of paint that led to this complex harmony, and not for the realistic details which are only an occasion and an excuse for the painting. Looked at from that point of view, it is undoubtedly a most outstanding work. The blue sky, the crimson flames on one side and the gorgeous sunrise on the other, the vast plain from foreground to the horizon, luminous like red gold under the light of the morning sun, the human figures like so many light-reflecting points themselves in many hues, all add up to a fascinating display of light and colour in an orderly well-organized composition.

Muharram

Another large composition is her "10th of Muharram" which shows a procession of "tazias" or tower-like floats of paper, and the "Zul-jinah" or decorated horse representing the horse of the great martyr Imam Husain, and the mourners beating their breasts and lacerating themselves with knives in

agonized sorrow at Imam Husain's martyrdom. Depicted also are the spectators and the shops and balconies of the street from where people are watching this moving spectacle.

Again, one finds that the painting of each figure is quite ordinary and sometimes quite poor but the organization of all these figures and other background details is just wonderful. The women in black robes are simply a smear of black. The half naked hefty mourners, who are swaying backward and forward as they raise their arms and beat their breasts and cut themselves with knives, are simply rendered as patches of burnt sienna, with some scarlet to indicate the blood. Their poses, as they jump and swing, are also clumsy. The same goes for many of the figures standing by, especially those crowding around the "Zul-jinah" horse. The horse itself, heavily decorated with garlands and flowers, is the worst. Its head alone is visible and that is quite pinched and mousy. There is not a single strong convincing stroke in depicting its legs or back. The "Tazia", which is often a thing of beauty, built with coloured paper, cardboard and tinsel, looks like a monster, and the long line of men carrying it are simply so many signs and symbols, little patches of colour that one has to take for men.

But the totality is most impressive. The mere arrangement of such a vast multitude in the painting is a *tour de force*. They have all been cast in a perspective arrangements. Those very near are shown in some detail, those in the middle distance more vaguely and those in the background and in the distance simply suggested by little dots or patches of colour. The size of the figures and the intensity of the colours diminishes with the distance and all are appropriately placed in the given space.

The broad division of space in the painting is very effective. The action and the focus is in the right half. Then the street and the procession going through it, are shown turning to the left (of the picture) and vanishing in the distance. So, the bottom left corner of the painting is almost empty, because here one can see only the back of the big signboards of the shop - for the whole scene is being viewed from high up, sitting on some balcony.



10TH MUHARRAM (4' x 6')

(AT RANG MAHAL LAHORE)

OIL PAINTING ON HARDBOARD



THE MUSIC LESSON (4' x 6')

OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS

The background of the shops and balconies in front has been very lovingly painted in detail, because some of them are lovely wooden structures, jutting out like bay-windows, with many arches above and dome-like shapes on top. The long line of shops below, decorated with colourful furled up curtains, and their normal signboards and awnings, have been painted so colourfully as if it were all the cave of Alladin, for everything is glowing and shimmering with colour.

It is a marvel how so many details could be crowded into the painting without cluttering and confusing it all! The control and organization of the innumerable details is masterly and the total effect is impressive in the extreme.

The Flood

Another noteworthy composition is "The Flood" which depicts a very vast scene, with the waters raging in the background and overwhelming the villages; a boat, in the middle ground, in which people are struggling to escape the flood, and in the foreground, a rescued dead or perhaps half dead old man lying on a charpai (string-woven cot) around whom are standing or sitting downcast mournful men, a woman and a child.

The faces and figures of the group in the foreground, their postures and even expressions, are clearly and aptly shown. Only the figures of the men in the middle distance have been depicted, by simply indicating the head and arms and in some cases, the torso and the legs. Those in the far distance are only vaguely suggested for there the stormy waves are swirling around the huts and houses and carts and haystacks.

The depiction of the angry waves and the surging flood is very conventional and diagrammatic rather than true to nature. Mostly, it is nothing more than wavy lines, one above the other, with some up curling, like a surge. Anyway, they serve the purpose of rendering the subject and, of course, like everything else in the painting, this also contributes its own colour patterns of many blues and greens, which is what matters in a painting like this in which play of

colour is the real subject, whatever else may be the ostensible theme.

Noteworthy is the arrangement of the group in the foreground around the charpai which has been placed diagonally at the base of the picture. At the top angle, is a tall standing figure and on either side of him, two lower figures, one sitting, one leaning.

Above this sad, still and silent group, in the middle distance, is the other group arranged around a boat which is horizontally placed in the middle of the picture, and this is full of action, showing people clambering on the edge of the boat and being pulled up.

Beyond that, in the distance, are village huts and houses, half submerged in the flood, and there the scene becomes chaotic.

The disposition of the figures and other objects, the division of the areas, if seen in the abstract, is very apt and delicately balanced.

The perspective has been effectively indicated by gradually diminishing the size of the images and lowering the intensity of the hues.

Altogether, it is a well planned and skilfully executed picture in which the subject enables the artist to present a very human scene of struggle against the elements and also provides an occasion for very animated brushwork which enlivens the picture.

War Paintings

Another large group of Mrs. Ahmed's paintings are the War Paintings that she was commissioned to do after the 1965 and the 1971 wars with India.

In 1965, she and her daughter Tahira, were taken on a conducted tour of the various fronts of the war. She lived under canvas with the various army regiments from Wagah to

Chhamb and Jaurian in Azad Kashmir. This was soon after the Ceasefire. The Indians were four miles inside the Pakistan border near Lahore, at Batapur.

"I set up my easel", she said,, and sketched the layout in pen and ink. I visualized the drama of the actual happenings, with people terrified at being caught between the two armies.

"As I sketched the broken bridge over the B.R.B Canal, Major Tajammul Husain apologized and said sadly, 'I had to blow up the bridge even though it was useful for the refugees coming over to safety. The Indian Army was approaching Lahore and one tank was about to cross the bridge. Lahore would have been taken. The Indian commander had sworn to have a drink in the Lahore Gymkhana. I had to make an instant decision and gave the order to blow up the bridge'.

'The Indians are observing you through their binoculars', said the Captain. 'I shall have to go and answer their queries as to who you are and what you are doing here'.

"He went off to send the message. I knew that U.N. Observers were supervising the Ceasefire, so I felt quite safe.

"By now, everything has been cleared away and there is only a tall bullet-shaped monument commemorating the action. I used my pen and ink drawing as the setting for the heroic action at Batapur.

"'There was no time', said the Captain. 'Something had to be done immediately to stop the tank crossing to this side of the Canal. We got hold of a haycart full of straw and unhitched the animals. Then we dragged it in front of a jeep mounted with an RR gun that had been hurriedly fixed on it so as to face the tank.'"

"The gunman who fired the historic shot that blow up the Indian tank was introduced to me. He had become deaf after the shot. Later, when I returned, I made him pose for me how he stood to load the gun. A haycart also was procured from somewhere to reconstruct the whole action and it was placed in front of the jeep mounted with an RR



THE MUJAHID (3' x 5½')

OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS

gun, so that I would get the military action correct.

"In my studio I painted two pictures, one for the regiment and one for myself. The 4 ft. X 6 ft. canvas, painted for Maj. Tajammul, was upright and concentrated on the military personnel and their heroic action.

"The other painting is quite different. It is a 4 ft. X 10 ft. horizontal painting in which I emphasized the terror of the people caught in this war drama. Some are blown up with the bridge, some escaping and jumping into the canal to escape to safety. Refugees on the farther bank are running to find safety across the canal but they are being mowed down by Indian snipers behind bushes. The painting has all the action as described by the soldiers who participated in the event. The haycart, the RR gun on the jeep and the tank being blow up, everything is there in the painting. The terror of the blood-spattered happenings, the shrieks of the people, the shouted orders of the military, it can all be heard as one looks at the painting.

"The Regiment acquired the 4 ft. by 6 ft. painting, I own the pen and ink sketch and General Sawar Khan purchased the 4 ft. by 10 ft. painting when he was Governor of the Punjab and it hangs in the G.H.Q."

This is how she recalls the creation of some of her war paintings. She also painted some other heroic actions that took place in the war. Portraits were also painted of the noble heroes who laid down their lives for the country such as Major Bhatti Shaheed, Brigadier Shamim Shaheed, Mahfooz Shaheed which are all in the War Museum at Rawalpindi.

Soon after the 1971 war also she painted a number of paintings, such as the one showing the action at Kanjeri Pul and at Hussainiwala. A complete list of the war paintings is given at the end of this book.

Her views on war paintings were candidly expressed in a conversation on 16 September, 1982, when she observed:

"War pictures are like book illustrations. The Brigadier or Colonel tells you what happened. You render it. So, it is illustration. It is not self-expression. Certainly, it offers an occasion to use my talent and ability to illustrate what happened. But it is not for joy, the joy of self-expression".

Philosophical Subjects

In a class apart are her paintings depicting philosophical subjects. These are the product of her old age when her approach became more reflective and she painted to convey an idea or a moral, like "We come with Nothing and we go with Nothing". Here a lonely naked man is shown standing helpless on the sea shore or perhaps the blue area behind him is the sky and the lower half of the picture is the ground.

Obviously, the picture will be judged as a work of art on artistic merits and not on philosophical considerations. Here, no doubt, a fine and impressive colour harmony has been created with a very effectively drawn black figure on whom light-red highlights play which pick up the broad features in swift sweeping strokes. The black figure and the bright highlights produce a striking, dramatic and strange effect, which is heightened by the full reflection of the figure falling in the watery sand.

The vertical wavy lines with which the sand has been depicted in yellows and oranges also give it an other-worldly effect. But whatever overtones of philosophical meaning it might or might not have, it is a very effective and exciting and colourfully painted area with lovely undulations of tone and colour. The sky, on the other hand, is horizontally painted in Prussian blue and yellow and light orange, all in horizontal streaks, one showing behind the other, like shot colour in fabrics. The diagonal tilt of the horizon prevents the layout from being flat and insipid and is in keeping with the alive and vibrant quality of the drawing and painting style.

Another effective painting in the philosophical vein is the death of the artist in which the good and evil angels are

struggling to get hold of the spirit of the dead person. The angels flying down and each holding one hand of the dead artist are well drawn and painted and the colour scheme also is effective.

The Dance of Death

"The Dance of Death" was a favourite theme with the artists of Medieval times and Renaissance to make satirical and sardonic comments on life, and to emphasize its uncertainty and futility. A famous example is the series of 41 small plates made by Hans Holbein early in the 16 century.

Mrs. Ahmed has painted an enormous mural on this subject consisting of six panels of 8 ft. X 4 ft., which means that the whole painting spreads over 24 feet in length and 8 feet in height.

The epical sweep of the subject embraces the whole history of man from the rise of the earliest civilizations to the end of all civilization that will follow the feared atomic holocaust.

Each panel shows the vain activities of man, with death laughing at him in the background, in the form of grinning skeletons.

The first panel shows persons representing the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Greece, with two dancers in the foreground one hindu and one Bhuddist. Corpses are scattered under their feet representing suffering humanity and ghoulis skeletons dance and leer behind them.

In the next one are depicted priests of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim religions, in frivolous dance poses which satirize their heartless indifference to human suffering and the vain and worldly lives they lead, oblivious of the death that awaits them and that is laughing at their ephemeral activities.

The third panel caricatures the statesmen and generals and dictators who play with human lives and shove them periodically into the fires of war and purposeless carnage.



PROFESSOR KHALID IQBAL (LIFE SIZE)
SCULPTURE IN PLASTER (COLOUR SILVER)

The fourth panel exposes the heartless merry-making of the landlords, the plutocrats and the warlords who are indulging in this shortlived carnival only to be pounced upon by death which is hovering over them in the background.

And then, these trivial activities of the puny creature, man, are overtaken and overwhelmed by the nuclear holocaust which, in one fell swoop, shatters, like a pack of cards, all the edifices of stone and mortar as also all the mansions of thought and civilization that he had built up.

The final and sixth panel shows him relapsing into the stone age or whatever you might call the primitive state of the helpless creature in his pristine animal form.

This is only the theme of the paintings but it is the rendering in paint that is the object of our attention. There is no doubt that each panel has been very artfully composed, with the large, looming skeletons dancing in the background and the smaller human figures very colourfully painted in the centre of the canvas while in the foreground is the floor littered with corpses.

The figure drawing avoids the details that could make it convincing. Rather, it sweepingly renders the outline of the limbs and the body in flowing lines, as long as the posture and the gestures are clear enough to be plausible. This slurring and glossing is understandable because the intention is to caricature the figures and therefore this simplified stylized rendering and these smoothed out contours are adequate for the purpose.

✓ The dresses are unruffled and evenly draped over the figures, as if on cushions, and where there are wrinkles, these are shown in stylized patterns, not in the true form of wrinkles appearing on dress. Sometimes the dress is so flatly drawn that it does not indicate the body and the limbs which are clothed in it, as in the case of the Pakistani turbaned landlord. ✓

No doubt, in a very large mural, the treatment has to be the broadest and simplest but even so, one small touch

here and there could make the figure come alive if it truly caught the form or movement of the body whereas at present they are more like puppets, which is, in a way right, as the intention is satirical.

The great achievement of this mighty mural is in composing the human figures in striking groups and placing each against the background of the dancing skeletons and the foreground of corpses.

Each panel is perfectly organized and the series of panels are harmonized together by their placement on the canvas and by their similar proportions and by the uniform blue-green of the skeletons in the background.

The colours of the main figures in each panel have no subtle variations and are applied fairly plainly but brightly and well adjusted in relation to each other. Scarlet cloaks are draped over long coats of dappled light Prussian blue while deep Cerulean blue is used on the uniform of one figure and on the coats of the plutocrat and the landlord. Orange is used on many parts of dresses and even on hands and hair in some cases, and on whole figures in the last panel.

So this repetition of orange, scarlet and blue from panel to panel holds them together while the icy blue-green of the skeletons further adds coherence.

There is no doubt that no one in Pakistan has conceived such a lofty, epical subject, and rendered such a crowded complex composition with such lucidity and compactness, such flowing continuity and such integrated unity.

Drawings

Because her paintings are done with the palette knife, the delineation of figures, animals, trees, houses and other objects and features often seems crude and clumsy.

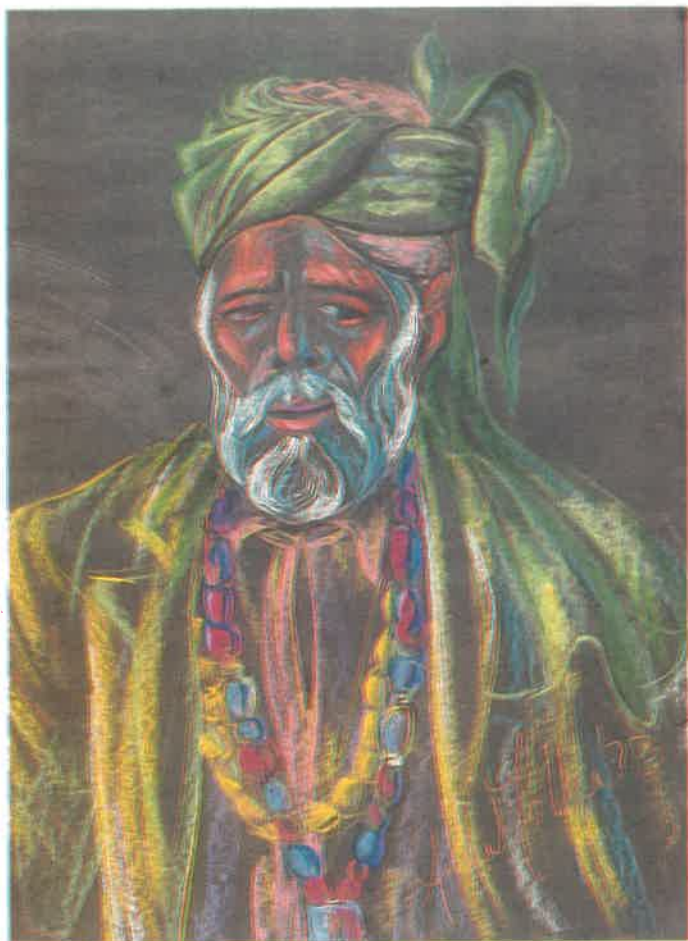
Perhaps she does not want to emphasize the exact outline and lineament and rather tries to catch the play of light and colour on objects in all its multicolour tonality and shimmering luminosity.

Whatever may be reason, she seems all thumb in her paintings as far as the drawing goes.

But when one sees the masses of drawings she has done during the last half century, of which she has stacks carefully preserved with her, one is amazed at the command of the line which is almost totally absent in her paintings, because there she is expressing herself in terms of masses, volumes and planes. Of course planes have edges but she paints planes like an Impressionist, broken up by the play of light, and not geometrically flat and hard-edged as in the Cubists.

It is interesting to compare the nude study of the same woman she has done in paint showing her sprawling sideways on the ground, and a drawing of her standing upright, facing the viewer. Here, of course, the outline of the figure is much more carefully painted than in most of her figure compositions because the one single full figure alone is the subject, without any clothes or any background at all. So, much more attention has been given to correct depiction of the curves of the body but even then the main effort of the artist has been to build the volume of each limb by showing the play of light on it, by varying the colours from yellow to light red to burnt umber, as the light diminishes from plane to plane. The colour, of course, is in patches and not in long streaks or lines. In fact, the line is nowhere in evidence except in the outline, the edges of the figure and there too it is by no means emphasized.

By contrast, the standing nude drawing is made up entirely of vigorous long strokes and springy lines that are so tense and tight that they seem to vibrate. There is not a bit of limpness or looseness in their rhythmic flow and the double pleasure comes from the fact that the lines are so apt and true to the objective view. The rise and fall of the curve as it passes from the shoulder to the upper arm and from the wrist to the tip of the arm; similarly from the hip to the bulging thigh, dipping in at the knee and then sweeping in a rising curve at the calf, again to the narrow ankle, it is all a thrill of pleasure to see the effortless freedom with which the swift lines are rendered, so rhythmic in themselves and so faithful



THE FAKIR (20" x 30")

PASTEL DRAWING

and veracious in describing the subject. Even the hands, and feet, which are the most difficult to draw, are delightfully accurate.

But accuracy by itself is not their charm. Accuracy can be achieved even with the most tired, lazy and limp line. Here the beauty of the drawing lies in the springiness of the line, its tenseness and tautness, its vigour and its rhythmic flow.

Again, this is not the rhythmic flow of Persian miniatures which ignore all the natural curves of the limbs and impose an imaginary and idealized smoothness of calligraphic strokes on the human figure and all other objects in the painting, whether rocks or water or trees or birds.

Here the rhythmic line follows the rise and fall of bone and muscle carefully and accurately observed.

To some extent, she too slurs over the detailed variation in the contour and draws one sweeping stroke to describe one side of a limb but this smoothing out and straightening out of minor variations in the outline all the more truly shows the bigger curve of which the smaller curves were apart. The bigger image, the total limb, is more forcefully and truly depicted and its formation more clearly brought out in this broad embracing view.

When the drawings are not of nudes, she also imposes rhythmic lines in drawing the dress, the hair, and sometimes, in too summary a fashion, the limbs too, but these rhythmic lines are never languid and poetic and decoratively calligraphic. This is vigorous forceful drawing, not jagged or heavily scraped in but having vigour combined with swiftness, force displayed with lightness and aplomb.

Monumental Paintings

The climax and culmination of Anna Molka's career as an artist are the three huge paintings she did in 1985 which she calls "Heaven", "Hell" and "Qiyamat" or The Day of Resurrection.

By the seriousness of their theme, the grandeur of the style and the magnitude of the scale in which they have been painted, they are epical and monumental paintings.

No other Pakistani painter has painted on this scale in the grand flamboyant style except Sadequain whose mural on the theme of man's "Saga of Labour" in the powerhouse of the Mangla Dam measures 170ft. by 20ft. But obviously, this subject cannot arouse the feelings of the artist or the viewer in the same way as vivid picturization of Heaven and Hell and the Day of Judgement. Anna Molka has dredged the very depths of her being for images of these subjects, which must have been matter of deep import to her for she considers these her last testament in art.

"Heaven"

"Heaven" consists of three panels of 9 feet by 5½ feet, which means overall dimensions of 9 feet by 16½ feet.

A broad strip at the bottom contains the foreground in the form of a placid stream on which swans and cranes are swimming on the right, men and women on the left. Lotus flowers are floating all over the water.

Just on the edge of the stream rise two huge trees, one on left and the other on right. They are placed on the border of the central panel so that half of the right tree falls in the right panel and much of the left tree in the left panel. The trees rise so high that only some lower branches and a little foliage is visible in the painting. The spreading branches above and the broad curving out roots at the base of the two trees make a circular frame for the broad vista that spreads in the background — an idyllic garden scene with long lines of flower beds and winding streams. A few figures are shown in the middle distance, relaxing and reclining, while many more are lightly indicated in the far distance, where the horizon is marked by a long line of low purple hills.

The space on either side of these two huge trees is filled by the same scene spreading laterally — the water in the foreground, the long horizontal lines of flower beds and streams

in the middle and background, the low hills on the high horizon, and the lower branches and lower foliage of the two huge trees forming the upper fringe of the painting.

Two long and thin trees on the extreme right and one on the extreme left balance and firmly hold the painting on either side.

The artist gives free rein to her imagination in depicting the denizens of Heaven. She shows them disporting in the water and on its edge, nearest to the viewer. In the middle distance, they are shown as if having a "Picnic on the Grass" and also amusing themselves on two swings that are suspended from the boughs of trees which are wreathed with flowering creepers. Many more figures are shown in the distance, sitting and standing in the midst of flowers and on the edge of cool blue streams.

The colour design of the picture is interesting and impressive. The whole view is divided into three parts by the two big trees. Between them is the main vista, almost round, and on either side are smaller extensions of the same scene in two smaller ovals or circles, framed within the lesser trees on the extreme right and left and the two big trees between them.

✓ The watery foreground is blue, and partly in shadow, the vast scene in the middle and background is in bright light and is painted orange and bright blue, while the upper fringe, formed by the foliage of the trees, is green and yellowish green.

Everything is painted conceptually, not realistically or in any other distinctive style. They are simply token signs that signify some object, like the numerous lotus flowers floating in the water right in front; or the long trailing creepers shown climbing one of the two huge trees and across the big opening in the middle to the other huge tree on the right and then down to the ground. They are just so many dots of green for leaves and red for flowers. The same goes for the foliage of the trees that forms the upper fringe of the enormous painting.



DANCE OF DEATH (8' x 4')
(OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS)



HEAVEN (9' x 5½')
(OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS)



HELL (9' x 5½')
(OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS)



"QIYAMAT" DAY OF RESURRECTION (16½' x 9')
(OIL PAINTING ON CANVAS)

Two figures in front, facing each other with out-stretched hands are carefully drawn. The rest in the middle distance and in the background are lightly suggested.

All the rest of the background, with its long lines of flower beds alternating with lines of streams which snake away winding far into the horizon, as also the low distant hills on the horizon, all are bare hints and symbols rather than fully developed and finished pictures.

✓ The entire beauty of the painting lies in the composition and the colour scheme. The dominating features are the two towering trees between which the vista of paradise spreads in the distance far up to the horizon. It is almost round because the boughs above and the curving roots below frame the scene and give it the look of distance.

The vista extends to right and left and is again anchored by one tree on the left and two on the right, all slightly smaller and farther than the two big trees.

The broad band of water in the foreground leads the eye into the painting and prevents abruptness in the presentation of the main scene. Although, the floating lotus flowers and the swans and the bathing figures and the waves of water are not shown too close, they are comparatively so and they help to establish the gradation of near, middle and far distance in the scene.

The two big trees very effectively divide the landscape into three parts, one between them and two on either side, and thus save it from monotony. These two big trees are very aptly balanced by a smaller tree on the left and two on the right, which help to hold up the painting firmly.

✓ The colour scheme is even more important. The vast scene of paradise is radiant with light and is painted in yellow and light orange and blue and some purple and green.

It is framed by the dark stretch of purple water in the foreground, the purple hills on the far horizon and the dark green foliage all along the top of the painting. One of the

two big trees on the left is purple and the other light brown; one of the smaller trees on the right is purple and the other light brown, quite arbitrarily. The left side of the scene has been painted darker, as if in shadow, right from the top to the bottom of the canvas, and perhaps that is why one of the big trees has been painted purple but then one small tree on the right also is shown purple although this side is supposed to be in light. It is all rather arbitrary but justified by the demands of composition.

"Hell"

"Hell" too is an enormous painting, as big as "Heaven" and is in fact a companion picture. Here also the vast panoramic scene is framed within two trees from one of which, on the left, long branches spread across on the top, where they link up with another tree and that with a third and so on with the large tree on the right.

Within this framework is shown a vast long oval cauldron filled with liquid fire from which huge flames are leaping high. Around the black wall of the cauldron too is a border of flaming fire.

Everywhere the puny figures of humans are shown undergoing the torture of hell. Many are chained to the trunks of the two trees. Innumerable are prostrate in the thorns. Numerous others are drowning in the liquid fire or are falling out of the raging bursting flames and are clearly visible against the black wall of the cauldron.

As in "Heaven" this painting also is treated like a landscape and there is no close-up view of any figure which could show the distraught faces of the damned creature.

The trees, the flames, the sea of fire, the human figures, all are little more than diagrams and suggestive signs of the objects. There is no solidity or verisimilitude. The flames and the waves are extremely conventional. The trees are formless. The human figures are bare symbols.

It is the design of the picture that holds together the

wealth of minute detail, but it is too overpowering and dominating, formal and rigid, making the picture rather monotonous and contrived.

In "Heaven" there is some variation between fore, middle and distant view but here there is a dead uniformity. Even the nearest figures are no more than match-stick figures or even more conventional.

✓
✓ Again it is the colour scheme or design that is the main attraction of the painting. The bright flaming orange of the long oval cauldron forms the central area of the picture and all around are slightly darker areas. There are the two big trees on right and left, the dense growth of cactus in the foreground and a dark strip of ground along the horizon on the top. Above that is the red hot sky of hell, completing the awesome scene.

"Qiyamat" Day of Resurrection

The third and last in this series of enormous monumental paintings done by Anna Molka is "Qiyamat", the most superlatively imaginative of all and also the most crowded and complex composition of all three.

The imagination of the artist has tried to reach out far to the very end of time, when the trumpet of doom will sound and all the world will collapse and all things will draw to an end in one concluding convulsion.

All human beings who ever lived will revive and rise from their graves to stand before the throne of God and be judged for their deeds on earth.

This multitudinous scene has called forth all the creative and compositional skill of the artist and she has tried to render a difficult subject on this vast canvas.

The horizontal rectangular canvas, measuring 9 feet by 16½ feet, like the other two canvases, Heaven and Hell, is here divided into three equal parallel parts, lengthwise. The upper one-third, above the horizon, is the sky, in which



the sun is shown having come down to a height of one and a quarter length of a spear, according to Muslim traditions. It is shown as an orange orb, within which are two broad red circles and again orange in the centre. Around it spread a series of circular orange lines, suggesting radiating heat and energy.

On the top right and left corner in the sky are two ram's horns from which thundering blasts are being blown announcing the end of the world. The horsemen of the Apocalypse, from the Bible, which are portents of the Day of Resurrection, are shown in the cerulean and cobalt sky. Near the horizon, on the earth, the mighty edifices of man, churches and mosques and palaces and assembly halls, are shown tottering to their fall. Mountains are toppling over and river torrents are blocked and overflowing.

Below the horizon, a vast concourse of mankind is standing crowded together, densely near the sun, which is right of centre, and increasingly sparsely to left and right.

The lower onethird of the picture, which shows the scene near the viewer, has separate figures, while, as they converge towards the sun, they merge and mingle and coalesce into a huge mass.

The separate figures present a dramatic and a somewhat macabre scene for skeletons are shown rising out of their graves. Some are partly and some wholly turned into men and women of flesh and blood. Some are still partly covered in their burial shrouds and some naked and all are wondering agape at the doom which has overtaken them.

There is no other feature in the scene except lying, sitting and standing skeletons and revived human beings and the coffins and graves out of which they have stepped out. Only a few broken and blasted tree trunks are visible, which add to the weirdness of the scene.

God and angels and prophets have not been shown because of religious scruples.

So much for the subject. The artistic rendering shows great skill in composing such a vast and crowded scene. As already pointed out, one-third of the picture at the top depicts the sky, and the lower two-thirds the vast body of resurrected mankind. Out of this, roughly half shows the people all jumbled together in a massed crowd, just below the sun, which is right of centre, and the lower half shows the individual figures, which are near the viewer.

Thus, a certain order and system has been imposed on the vast crowded scene by gradually dispersing it to left and right and downward, that is near the viewer. The huge crowd is moving not towards the top centre but slightly to the right, which makes a better design. Although, the human figures are not shown in lines or files but such lines are suggested on the ground and these are all shown converging towards the sun.

The massed crowd on the top is bright orange while all the separate figures are light orange. The shrouds are light blue and the ground is all light and dark blue, linking up with the sky which is cobalt and cerulean blue. The trees are dark orange and brown, if near, and light orange and purple, if far. The distribution of light has contributed to the orderly arrangement of the scene for the centre of interest is the bright sun, the brightest object in the picture; the packed crowd below the sun is also strongly irradiated while the brightness diminishes as the figures recede from the sun to left and right and downward. The dark blue ground provides a strong contrast to the orange figures and helps to hold together the vast and varied composition and also to link it up with the blue sky.

It is remarkable that there are no flat or blank areas on this vast canvas. Every inch has been filled with some detail, whether graves or coffins or trees or lying skeletons or figures or shrouds. This calls for great ingenuity and much labour.

Showing the skeletons in many poses also requires close study of the bony structure of man. The men of flesh and blood are merely suggested in the distance but where they are shown close-up, they are carefully and correctly



drawn and painted. Even the closest figures are treated suggestively and not fully finished. They are just so much masses or patches of colour in a colouristic design, which is basically what the paintings of Anna Molka purport to be. The blazing orange and red sun on the horizon, the strongly illuminated orange crowd just below the sun, the interspersed orange and blue figures of human beings and skeletons, respectively, in the thinning out crowd to left and right, the increasing size and clarity of the human figures towards the viewer, and the arrangement of these figures in lines radiating from the sun outwards, all this makes an excellent design both colouristically and lineally and spatially.

It is undoubtedly a remarkable *tour de force* of the artist, marking the culmination of her long career as an artist.

REVIEWS AND COMMENTS

ANNA MOLKA'S FASCINATING ART EVOKES ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE

by ANWAR IQBAL
Pakistan Times, May 6, 1984.

An Exhibition of paintings by Anna Molka was inaugurated by Niaz Mohammad Arbab, Minister for Culture, at the Liaquat Memorial Hall on Thursday evening. Speaking on the occasion, Khalid Saeed Butt, Director of the PNCA, praised the artist and her work, pointing out the role she had played in promoting art in Pakistan. He suggested the establishment of an art gallery in the artist's name. Paintings which she would donate could be kept there and serve as a monument to her dedication and love for her adopted country.

The Minister in his brief address readily promised the gallery in Islamabad and was highly appreciative of Anna as a person and an artist. He closed his speech with a request for a standing ovation for Anna, to which the guests responded willingly.

On display were over seventy oil paintings, about forty pastel drawings which included some of her earlier works and various sculptures. I noticed she used a lot of yellows and oranges to convey heat and emotion, while switching to blues and greens to express sorrow and the sombre aspects of life.

I found her themes very different and not repetitive. Her love for the people of her adopted country shows in her paintings for she had painted many ordinary people or rather the people who are the backbone of a country, the peasants, workers, and the poor and there are many paintings of the aged, a theme she dwells on in different ways.



A huge landscape painted without the help of sketches in a village of the Punjab depicts a realistic panorama of village life. Another one of the same size shows the Zuljinah procession on the tenth of Moharram and the three dimensional effect has been achieved with the curve of the buildings very impressive. Anna has put down many of her thoughts in symbolic paintings. There is the one where Age and Childhood keep each other company while Youth strides forward . . . "They are the ones that really live . . ." said Anna. An extra large painting showing the exodus of the Muslims toward the promised land could have applied to any refugees, in any land. Her pre-occupation with her own death is seen in the painting where the spirits of good and evil are fighting for possession of her spirit. "Who will win?" asks the painting. "We come with nothing and we go with nothing" proclaims another. "What are we striving for," one is apt to ask oneself after looking at this.

Anna's love for her religion, to which she converted at the age of eighteen, because she felt that Islam was a universal religion, is reflected in some of her paintings, the most eye catching one being 'Azan' in which she had shown the seven heavens above the Muezzin calling the people to prayer, against a background of different colours for the different prayers.

The two paintings which I liked were the one of Anna's house and the one titled "Shaheed", which I went back to see over and over and over again. I wish I could afford to buy the scene from Muridke village. Well, may be some day.

A title "Living Rubbish" caught my attention while glancing through the brochure. I went back to look at the painting and saw a heap of emaciated bodies lying on rubbish. I asked Anna what this meant. "That is how society looks at us retired people" she replied. We are useless and forgotten . . . in effect, living rubbish?" Well, all I can say is, as far as art and artists go, Anna will neither be considered useless nor forgotten. Her paintings have an aura of history about them. Many of our artists have studied under her

guidance, and many more lucky one will do so if not in the university then I hope privately. So, you are not living rubbish, Anna, but the spirit of art incarnate.

ANNA MOLKA – HER STYLE

by TALAT AHMED

Pakistan Times, February 3, 1984.

Anna Molka Ahmed describes herself as an "Expressionist", as her paintings reflect emotions that were transmitted by means of knife work. The colours were applied to depict the force and height of feelings, at the time of composition. According to Anna, "The tempo of applying paints becomes faster with the rise of emotions and the colours become vibrant and exaggerated", becoming either sombre or much brighter with the prevailing mood. Reminiscent of Van Gogh, her paintings have thick paint and plenty of yellow and blue.

Anna usually paints on location and her "Punjab landscape" which is six feet by four feet, was composed in a village 14 miles from Shahdara. Village folks gaped at her when she squeezed the paint from the tubes all over the canvas and made the first stage of her composition with the palm of her hand.

Another of her large paintings also of the same size shows the "Zul Jinah" procession on the tenth Muharram. It is passing through Kashmiri Bazar and the Sunehri Masjid is seen on the left. A three dimension effect is seen by the curve of the building. Anna sat at the top of a house on the occasion of three "Zul jinah" processions, which meant her waiting three years to complete the painting.

Her love for Islam is reflected in her works. She gave up her family religion, Judaism, and embraced Islam at the age of 18 years. To a query she replied: "I was dissatisfied with Judaism as I felt it was not in consonance with the idea of Universal brotherhood of mankind. The Holy Qur'an had been revealed for all the universes. Also Islam had no pre-

judices against colour or creed and points out the good way of life".

Her painting on "Haj" is impressive with its spiritual quality and another entitled "Azan" is bright and eye catching. Shown is a man calling out people to pray. Above him are the seven heavens and on the side are painted the time for prayer in different colours.

Anna cheerfully pointed out the painting in which she has depicted her demise. Her spirit is seen rising from her corpse and the forces of evil and good are reaching out to catch her hands. She laughed at another. "I have called it 'Living rubbish'. It reflects what I first felt on my retirement at being abandoned and forgotten".

Anna Molka Ahmed has probably done thousands of paintings. Her pastel drawings are mostly sketches for the painting on refugees.

Since her heart and soul are with the people and places of Pakistan, Anna has painted the ordinary people, the peasants and the aged. She has shown the tribulations of the refugees crossing the border in 1947, the misery of floods and the army in action in war. One of her paintings was composed inside Indian territory during ceasefire. Enjoying the scenery at Swat and Murree, Anna painted these on location.

Sculpture Portraits

Referring to her sculpture portraits, the artist observed "I feel a strong urge for three dimension work and satisfy myself through modelling as it is in harmony with impasto paintings, having thick paints." She mused, "I sculpture my friends while they are talking to me. It is in plaster and takes an hour or two to do their heads".

Talking of her future work, Anna quipped: "Painting on canvas is an expensive business. I might take to doing miniatures on paper".

Apparently, artist quality paints imported from reputable firms in Europe and the U.S.A. are costly. Anna usually gets hers from abroad. Pakistani artists who rely on paints available in the local market are compelled to use those meant for students, that are liable to fade in a few years. The brushes are also an imported item and are dear. Anna is happy about the good quality canvas being manufactured in Pakistan.

Her studio has frames, canvas and unfinished works. Some unframed incomplete ones are neatly stacked on the shelf. She reminisced about her students - a list too long to mention here.

Asked to comment on the future of art in Pakistan she said: "We have plenty of talent. Recognition and encouragement is essential for any creative skill to grow and flourish".

OIL PAINTINGS

		Feet
1. Punjab Village	canvas	4 x 6
2. 10th Muharram	hardboard	4 x 6
3. Verily this is not less than a Message to (all) the Worlds	canvas	4 x 8
4. Refugees	canvas	4 x 8
5. Murree Mall	canvas	2½ x 4
6. The Blind Hafiz	canvas	2½ x 4
7. The Flood	canvas	3 x 5
8. The Mujahid	canvas	3 x 5½
9. The Bride	hardboard	3 x 3½
10. News	canvas	2½ x 4
11. Quaid-e-Azam	canvas	2 x 3
12. The Jawan	hardboard	3 x 5
13. Still-Life with Bottles	hardboard	1½ x 2
14. Why!	hardboard	1½ x 2
15. Kohistan Man and Child	hardboard	1½ x 2
16. Behrain, Swat	hardboard	1½ x 2
17. Pakistani Girl	hardboard	1½ x 2
19. Living Rubbish	hardboard	3 x 3½
20. The Shaheed	hardboard	2½ x 4
21. The Tazia	hardboard	2 x 4
22. The Azaan	hardboard	3 x 3½
23. The Mourners	hardboard	2 x 3
24. Bougainvillea	hardboard	2 x 4
25. The Spirit	hardboard	2½ x 4
26. Kite Flying	hardboard	2 x 3
27. Landscape Village	hardboard	2 x 3
29. Shaheed II	hardboard	2½ x 4
30. Wagah Border	canvas	2 x 3
31. Namaz	hardboard	2 x 4
32. Reading Quran	canvas	2 x 3
33. Ch. Rahmat Ali	canvas	20" x 26"
34. Amaltas Tree	canvas	1½ x 2
	Courtesy Miss R. Khanna	
35. Jinnah Bagh	canvas	20 x 26
	Courtesy S. Babar Ali	

36. Garden	canvas	20 x 26
37. The Party	hardboard	2 x 4
38. Old Man	canvas	20 x 26
39. Old Man (Blue)	canvas	1½ x 2
40. Woman Resting	hardboard	1½ x 2
41. Washing clothes	hardboard	1½ x 2
42. Amaltas in garden	hardboard	1½ x 2
43. Circle of Life	hardboard	2½ x 4
44. Refugee Train 1947	hardboard	2 x 4
45. Quaid-e-Azam	canvas	2½ x 4
46. Allama Iqbal	canvas	2½ x 4
47. Whither	hardboard	2½ x 4
48. Qiyamat	hardboard	2½ x 4
49. Old man	hardboard	1½ x 2
50. Old Man	hardboard	1½ x 2
51. Deserted	hardboard	2½ x 4
52. Cats and Dogs	hardboard	2 x 4
53. Jinnah Bagh	canvas	20 x 26
54. Shafiq Farooqui	hardboard	1½ x 2
55. The Kaaba	hardboard	3 x 3½
56. The Gate	hardboard	2 x 3
57. Monsoon Garden	canvas	2 x 3
58. My home	hardboard	3 x 3½
59. Punjab University	canvas	3 x 5
60. Attaining Nirvana	hardboard	2 x 3
61. Self Portrait I	canvas	1½ x 2
62. Self Portrait II	canvas	1½ x 2
63. Self Portrait III	hardboard	18 x 21
64. Begum Shami (late)	canvas	1½ x 2
65. Khalid Iqbal	canvas	1½ x 2
66. Sufi Waqar	hardboard	2 x 3
67. Colin David	hardboard	2 x 3
68. Moin Najmi	canvas	1½ x 2
69. Prof Mohammad Shafi (Late)	canvas	15 x 22
70. The Green Gate	hardboard	2 x 2½
71. Interior	hardboard	2 x 2½
72. Verandah and Flower Pots	canvas	2 x 3
73. Punjabi Farmer	canvas	3 x 6
74. Worry	hardboard	1½ x 2
75. Zeri in the Garden	canvas	2½ x 4

76.	Hear no evil, See no evil, Speak no evil	hardboard	2½ x 4
77.	We come with nothing and we go with nothing	hardboard	2 x 3
78.	Mrs. Talat Ahmed	canvas	1½ x 2
79.	Light from the Quran	hardboard	2 x 4
80.	Refugees from East Punjab 1947	canvas	5 x 10

PASTEL DRAWINGS

1. Old Woman in Burqa
2. Baba with Pugri
3. Baba Profile
4. Baba
5. Elder Baba
6. Two Brothers
7. The Pathan
8. The Fakir
9. Nasreen
10. Workers (Pencil)
11. Azaan
12. Dua
13. Tasbi
14. Namaz
15. Portrait in Green and Orange
16. Portrait of Old Man
17. Punjabi
18. Pathan Head
19. Old Man and Boy seated
20. Old Man and Boy walking
21. Chowkidar
22. Seated Afghan
23. Old Man
24. Woman in Prayer
25. Green portrait
26. Wrestling
27. Desperate
28. Reclining Figure

29. Two men seated
30. Standing Figure
31. Three Sketches
32. Sorrow (woman)
33. Standing Figure
34. Bent old man
35. Two Women
36. Old man seated
37. Coolie
38. Head
39. Contemplation
40. Two women
41. Standing Pathan
42. Boy with wheel
43. Sketch

SCULPTURE HEADS

Modelled in Clay and Cast in Plaster:

1. Mian Afzal Hussain (Late)
2. Dr. S.K. Wasti

3. Dr. Hamid Mirza - (Courtesy Dr. Mirza).
4. Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum (Late).
5. Professor Khalid Iqbal.
6. Professor Miss Naseem Qazi.
7. Professor Dr. Rafia Hassan -
8. Professor Dr. Rifat Rashid -

9. Mr. Sohail Wali
10. Mr. Moti Shah (Late).
11. Adolescence.
12. Young Adult.
13. Mr. Moyeen Najmi.
14. The Blind Man.

The Pakistan Army Commissioned a number of portraits of Shaheeds and various actions during the 1965 and 1971 wars:

1. Life-size portraits Major Bhatti
3 ft. x 6½ ft. (Headquarters)
2. Mahfooz Shaheed (Headquarters)
3. Overlife-size: the Quaid-i-Azam
Mohammad Ali Jinnah
4. Major Bhatti (20 in x 26 in.) War Museum
5. Capt. Sarwar Nishan-i-Haider
6. Brigadier Shami War Museum
7. Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah
8. Mr. Bhutto
9. Major Fakhr-a-Alam for III
Lancers, Nowshera.
10. Action of the Perimeter, 1965 4 ft x 6 ft
11. Action at Qaisar-e-Hind, 1965 (3 painting) 4 ft x 6 ft
12. Action of Mahfooz at Kanjeri Pul, 1971 4 ft x 6 ft
13. Action at Ulleka Post, 1965 4 ft x 6 ft
14. Landscape of Kanjeri Pul with the Fort
in the foreground, 1971 3 x 4½ ft
15. Attack on Amritsar, 1965 4 ft x 6 ft
16. Attack on Wagah, 6th September, 1965 4 ft x 6 ft
17. Action of Lt. Saeed Tiwana, Sitara-e-Jurrat War Museum
18. Portrait of General Habib
19. Portrait of oldest bearer of army in
N.W.F.P.



Anna Molka Ahmed

Born on 13 August, 1917 in London to a Polish mother and a Russian father. From her childhood Anna had a restless and enquiring mind. She was gifted with creative impulse that sought expression in art. To cultivate her Passion she joined St. Martin School and then the Royal College of art in London. It was while studying at the Royal College that she met Sheikh Ahmed who was on his way back from the U.S.A. to his home in Amritsar. The acquaintance of like minded people blossomed into a romantic relationship. Anna liked the young man and liked his religion also. She resolved to embrace Islam and the two kindled souls decided to live in unison. The matrimony was solemnized on 9 September, 1939.

The couple sailed back home and reached Amritsar by the close of 1939.

It was 1940 that she was selected by the Punjab University, Lahore to establish and chair the Department of Fine Arts. She nourshed and nurtured the seedling of her own plantation to grow into a full size flowering and shade-giving tree. She presided over the department for about 34 years and still continues helping it with part-time support.

