

KHALID IQBAL

A Pioneer of Modern Realism in Pakistan



MUSARRAT HASAN

Khalid Iqbal: A Pioneer of Modern Realism in Pakistan is the first book in a series on the leading artists and craftsmen of Pakistan being jointly published by the Research and Publication Centre, National College of Arts, Lahore and Ferozsons (Pvt.) Ltd., Lahore.

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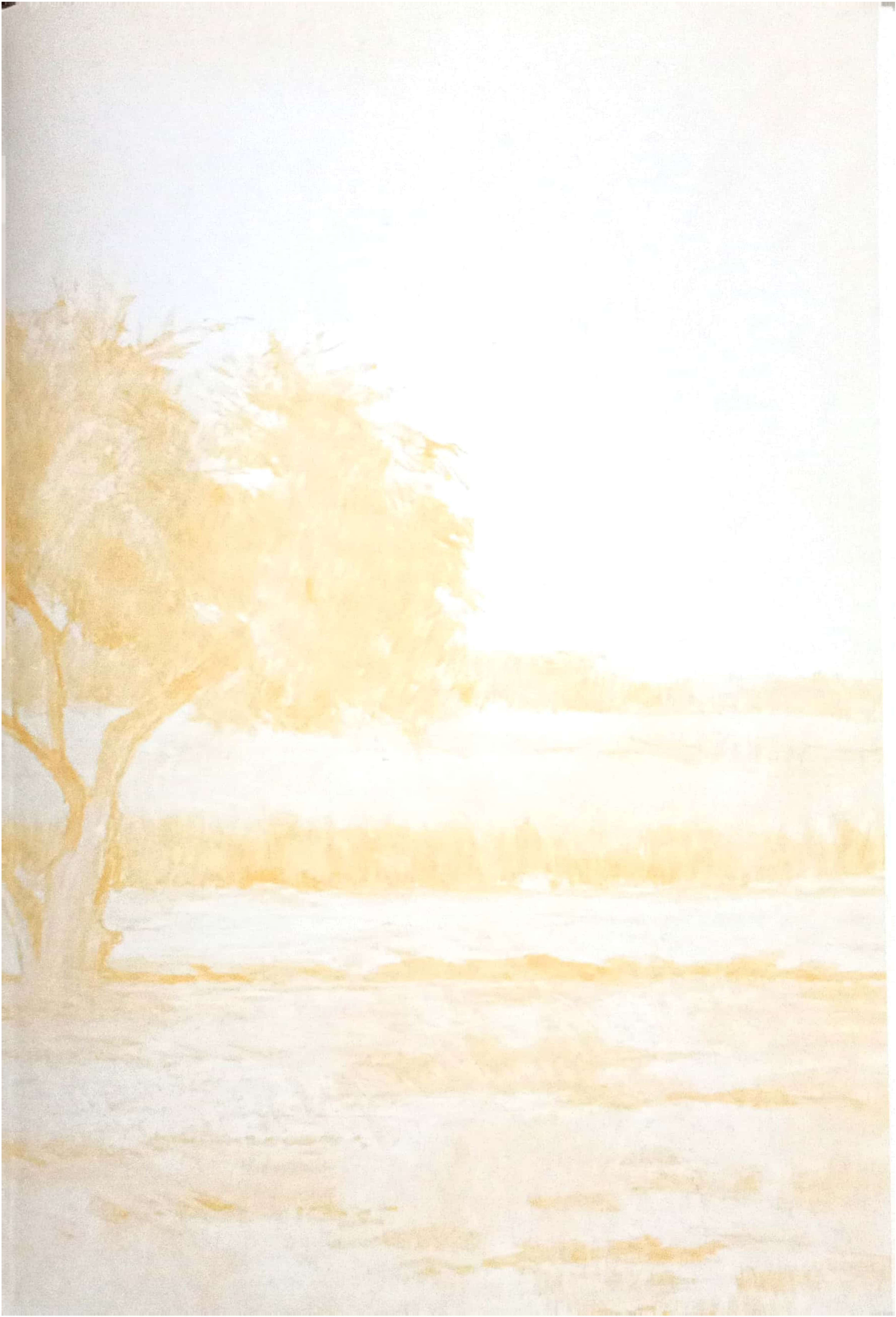
One of the Centre's major undertaking is the initiation of Artists and Craftsmen Series which is intended to record and celebrate the contributions of generations of Pakistani artists and craftsmen to the world of art and design.

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Khalid Iqbal

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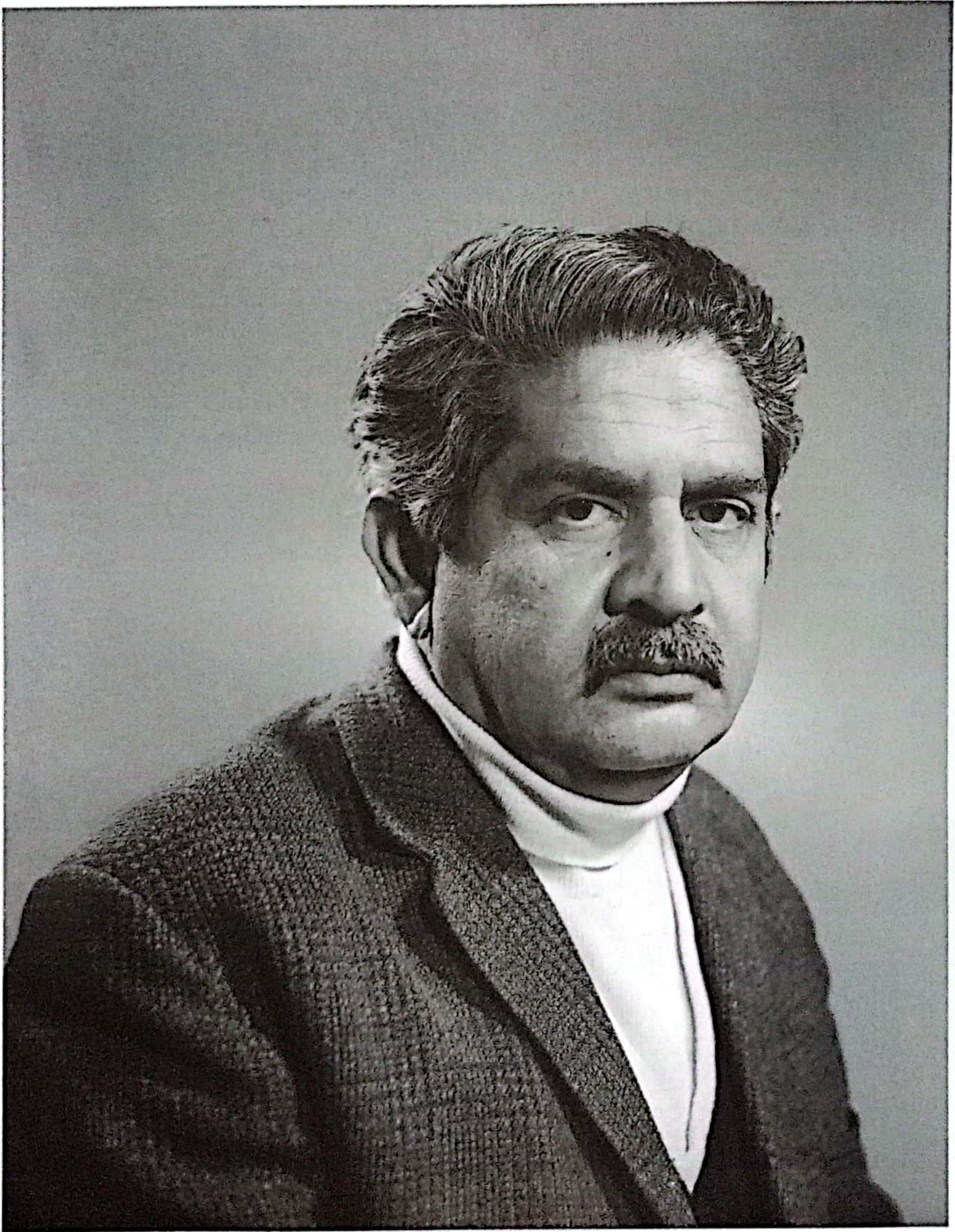
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CONTENTS

Foreword	5
Preface	7
Chronology	9
The Early Years	11
Widening Horizons	15
At the Punjab University	19
At the National College of Arts	30
Post Nineteen Eighties	38
References	72
List of Illustrations	73
List of Photographs	74



1. Khalid Iqbal

FOREWORD

The year was 1963 and I had taken my matriculation examination. It was summer and among the trees of the Arts Council on the Mall, with its old building and canteen, my sister and I decided to study painting. I remember well Khalid Sahib as he walked from one student to another, suggesting, coaxing and helping them to see and paint the actual object and not just preconceived images. In more than one ways he taught me to see and understand reality, beyond the obvious, of objects, events and life. That is the essence of Khalid Sahib, he presents an every day scene and you see the subtlety of shapes and meaning in a gentle way he prods your understanding and you begin to see better and you see anew what was always before you. As Dr. Musarrat Hasan has put it so aptly, 'Khalid's deft brush stroke and his superb eye for tone create miles of distance in a small area of his canvas'. Only he in his inimitable manner can speak volumes in his soft and understated manner. A self-effacing person he travels great distances in search of quality and depth of meaning. He does not impose his views but there is a pristine quality in the clarity of his ideas and it is a pleasure to hear him talk about his favorite subject – painting.

As a member of the community of the National College of Arts he is valued and honoured by the faculty and the students. He did us honour and made us proud by accepting the chair of Professor Emeritus of the College. It is appropriate that Dr. Musarrat Hasan, a historian of standing, a painter of renown and Khalid Iqbal's student agreed to write this book for the Research and Publication Centre (RPC) of the College. However, it required a bit of convincing getting Khalid Sahib on board. "I do not want to promote myself," he said but then he consented when it was pointed out that the vast number of students would learn and benefit from his experiences and work. Only an appeal to his generosity to give, convinced him and as the book shows he gave unreservedly. Dr. Hasan had the good fortune to discover at first hand Khalid Sahib's views on painting and hear his reminiscences about the past and through this book she shares them with the reader. Dr. Hasan's own sensitivity and understanding come through so eloquently.

The book on Khalid Iqbal is the first of a series on prominent artists planned by the Research and Publication Centre of the National College of Arts. Ferozsons have kindly agreed to be our co-publishers.

Professor Sajida Haider Vandal,
*Principal, National College of Arts,
Lahore*



PREFACE

Writing a book on Khalid Iqbal has been an interesting experience. An artist who does not like to say much about himself or his work is however not an easy subject to tackle. Khalid Iqbal is evasive and visibly self-conscious when talking in front of a tape recorder. I found him considerably relaxed when the recorder had been put away.

Some of the conversations I had with him, brought back memories of Lahore of the fifties and sixties. That was a time when artists had more time for each other, to criticize, appreciate or to be generally supportive. These were the decades when artists liked to mingle here in Lahore from all over Pakistan. They shared a common cause to establish a contemporary art movement, and interacted with each other as a community. That feeling of togetherness has gone now, but fortunately Khalid Iqbal and a few others are still around to bring back the flavour of those days.

Khalid Iqbal has had, as some would say, an uneventful life. But what a lot he has put into these uneventful years. Each day of his life has added to his work. Khalid usually begins his day rather early when the morning haze has not lifted, and the average citizen has not opened his eyes and stirred out of bed. Unto each

day he has patiently worked on a wide range of prospects, patiently mapping, plotting and knitting together the visual reality of Lahore's outer urban and rural fringes as no one else has done.

The second difficulty I faced on undertaking this book on Khalid Iqbal was that he has no record of his paintings in the form of transparencies, photographic prints, newspaper clippings or other published material. It is also quite amazing that being one of the pre-eminent painters of Pakistan, who is widely respected and appreciated, he has never had a solo show in his life. When you voice a protest he candidly replies, 'If my work is worth anything, posterity will find a way of locating and documenting my paintings.' What can you say to this irrefutable argument? If, like most other painters, he had held successive exhibitions of his work, the brochures and catalogues alone could have been of immense help in at least identifying the titles and the dates when his pictures were painted.

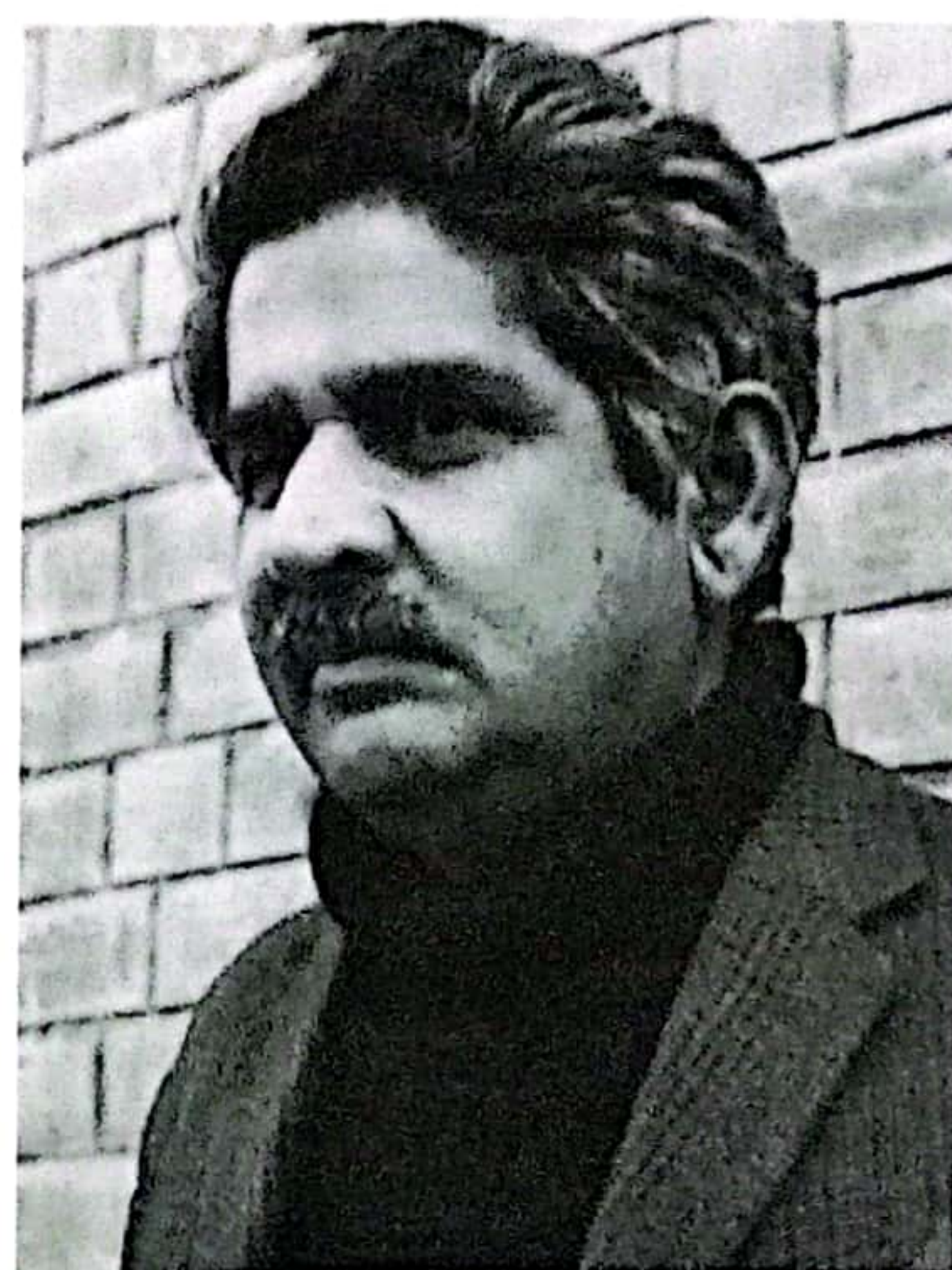
I was fortunate to have the assistance of a team of research assistants from the Research and Publication Centre, National College of Arts, who helped to photograph the paintings in various collections. In this aspect, the research

assistants like Ms. Saima Younus and Ms. Maria Kareem were most resourceful. The publication unit of the RPC comprising Ms. Samina Choonara, Mr. Nadeem Omar and Mr. Hussain Ahmad Khan provided a great deal of help in proof-reading and managing the production of the book, but I'm afraid the exact information about many of the paintings could not even then be accurately determined. Khalid Iqbal's works are seldom signed and he is always vague about the dates as well as the size of his paintings.

I am especially indebted to Mr. Zaheer Salam, the publisher and the many invaluable members of his team like Mr. Aamir Anwar and Mr. Fazal Muhammad Khan, who patiently made a special effort to ensure that the works of Khalid Iqbal are properly reproduced. A smallest error in reproduction would have destroyed the entire tonal and textural complexity of the artist's work. I would also like to thank Professor Sajida Haider Vandal, the Principal National College of Arts for her unfailing support and the keen interest she has taken in this project.

Musarrat Hasan

KHALID IQBAL



2. Khalid Iqbal

- 1929 Born in Simla on 23rd June.
- 1945 O Level from St. Joseph's Academy, Dhera Dun.
- 1948 Art lessons from Sheikh Ahmad in Lahore.
- 1949 BA from FC College, Lahore.
- 1949-52 Art Teacher at the Aitchison College, Lahore.
- 1952 Diploma in French from Oriental College, Lahore.
- 1952-55 Studied Fine Art at the Slade School of Arts, University of London.
- 1956-65 Appointed Senior lecturer, Department of Fine Arts, University of the Punjab, Lahore.
- 1965 Appointed Associate Professor and Head of the Fine Art Department, National College of Arts, Lahore.
- 1974 Promoted as Acting Principal of National College, Lahore.
- 1976 Awarded fellowship of the National College of Arts.
- 1977 Given the Quaid-i-Azam Award in painting
- 1979 Appointed Professor of Art, NCA, Lahore
- 1980 Awarded the President's Medal for Pride of Performance.
- 1980 Took long leave for one year.
- 1981 Retired from service.
- 1993 Accepted the Chair of Professor Emeritus at the National College, Lahore.

THE EARLY YEARS

Khalid Iqbal is a pioneer of modern realism in Pakistani painting. His works include portraits, still lives and portrayal of familiar prospects found on the fringes of Lahore city.

He captures the relationship between objects and space with his immaculate observation and a strong sense of tone. Khalid has evolved a casual technique and manner of painting that lends intimacy and warmth to the prospects which are so dispassionately observed. He has a considerable empathy with nature and there is hardly a moment of the day which has not found its way into his compositions.

In the heart of Model Town stands a large, unassuming house with a garden that can boast of many varieties of exotic plants. An amazing number of botanical curiosities have been collected in this garden over many years. It is the residence of a painter who has nurtured these plants, watched over them and cherished their growth through every stage of their development. Khalid Iqbal loves plants and has spent a lifetime with nature observing its various moods and recording its vagaries.

Over the years, Khalid Iqbal has achieved the status of an institution that has stressed the necessity for painters to

align themselves with nature. He is respected and revered by artists and art lovers of many generations and has influenced the thinking and styles of a vast majority of them. With an uninterrupted career focused on painting for almost sixty years, Khalid Iqbal has consciously resisted the onslaught of modern trends in painting. However, even his critics admit that although he has adhered to representational painting, his technical virtuosity, skill and his personal vision lends his works a contemporary ambience that enables them to stand comfortably beside any modern work of art.

In this context it might be of interest to share the thoughts of some of the protagonists of a style of painting that made a clean break with the past and refused to conform with existing trends. These artists have not minced their words about nature being their source of inspiration.

Mondrian, perhaps the most non-representational of modern painters, admits that

'Although art is fundamentally everywhere and always the same, nevertheless two human inclinations, diametrically opposed to each other appear in its many and varied expressions. One aims at the

direct creation of universal beauty, the other at the aesthetic expression of oneself. In other words, of that which one thinks and experiences. The first aims at representing reality objectively, the second subjectively... Nevertheless, the two opposing elements (universality-individuality) are indispensable if the work is to arouse emotion... For the artist, the search for a unified expression through the balance of two opposites has been and always will be, a continual struggle.¹

Khalid Iqbal has spent a lifetime trying to achieve this unified expression. In the beginning of his career, he devoted as much time to life painting and still life as he did to landscape, producing a large body of work that is now mostly based on his perception and interpretation of landscapes that survive on the fringes of rural Punjab and on the outskirts of Lahore city. His landscape has thus acquired a position that verges on the eastern concept of *riyaz*, which is time spent in the company of nature and its multifarious manifestation of moods and tempers, colour and light, atmosphere and temperatures, with relentless regularity, intensity of commitment and personal surrender.

We can be quite sure that Greenberg envisaged the emergence of just such a quality of landscape when he said, 'To hold that one kind of art must invariably be superior or inferior to another kind means to judge before experiencing. The whole history of art is there to demonstrate the futility of rules of preference laid down beforehand: the

impossibility, that is, of anticipating the outcome of aesthetic experience. The critic doubting whether abstract art can ever transcend decoration is on ground as unsure as Joshua Reynolds was when he rejected the likelihood of the pure landscape's ever occasioning works as noble as those of Raphael.'²

It brings to mind a letter written by Cezanne in which he paraphrases Couture who used to tell his pupils: 'Keep good company, that is, go to the Louvre. But, after having seen the great masters who repose there, hasten out and by contact with nature revive the instincts and sensations of art that dwell within us.'³

This sentiment is echoed by Matisse who seems to endorse Cezanne's gravitational attraction towards nature, 'An artist must possess Nature. He must identify himself with her rhythm, by efforts that will prepare the mastery that will later enable him to express himself in his own language.'⁴

It is obvious that Matisse used his own expression and language, but there seems to be a common goal in the urge to master nature and to identify with its forces and rhythm. Even though the painting styles of the two maestros were radically different, they still shared a number of beliefs and inspirations that denied the past, yet clung on to it in many essential aspects.

Born in Simla on 23rd June 1929, Khalid Iqbal spent his childhood in the Saint Joseph's Academy in Dhera Dun a school at the foothills of the Himalayas. His father was posted in the Indian

Military College there. At night, the lights of Moussourie, the famous Himalayan summer resort, looked like stars spangled on a dark blue summer sky. To be in Dhera Dun was to be enchanted by the magic of nature, although Khalid Iqbal was quite unaware at the time that his casual talent in painting and drawing would ever receive any recognition.

World War II was on. Though Dhera Dun was not directly affected, the waves of uncertainty were disturbing. At home, there was the struggle to win freedom from the British rulers who were fighting a war, wasting the resources and peoples of their colonies in a conflict that was not theirs. In these troubled times, one of Khalid's close friends and companions was Taufiq Rafat, who later came to be known for writing English verse, and whose friendship Khalid appreciated and nurtured till Taufiq's death in 1996. A large number of foreign students who left Europe for Dera Dhun to escape the ravages of war, were studying there in various English public schools.

One of Khalid's fellow students was a friend from Greece who chose to study Art as one of his subjects for the O level examination at the time that it was first introduced to the school. When Khalid saw his friend's drawings, he was shocked at their quality. It was the first time it occurred to him that if Greeki, as they playfully nicknamed him, could consider his drawing good enough to submit for an examination, why not himself? This, he reasoned, would enable him to continue to draw and paint – something that he really enjoyed. Khalid

recalls his youthful pencil drawings and his water colours done at that time. It was clear to him that even his very casual drawings compared most favourably with Greeki's work. The examination was to be held in 1945 and Khalid came through with credit and a renewed interest in painting. Then his world fell apart. What had been India became three different countries. Apart from the emotional turmoil, there was great hardship for a large number of people who lost their homes and were forced to change residence. The British division of the two countries was done along lines that were obscure and unclear. Consequently, there was widespread rioting and bloodshed that forced a large majority of people to flee their native homes to protect their lives. Although not directly affected by the violence, Khalid Iqbal's family decided to migrate to Pakistan, arriving in Lahore bewildered and uncertain.

His continuing interest in drawing and painting brought him for further instruction to the Mayo School of Arts where Sheikh Ahmed was teaching after having just returned from the Royal College of Arts in London. He was the only instructor at the school who made any impact on Khalid, but he soon left the Mayo School disenchanted with the method of teaching there. Instead, Khalid joined the evening classes where Sheikh Ahmed was teaching and appeared for his Bachelor of Arts Exam from the FC College in 1949. He also completed a Diploma in French from the Oriental College in 1952. On several occasions

when he visited him at his house, Khalid Iqbal met Sheikh Ahmed's wife, Anna Molka Ahmed, also from the Royal College, who had taken up the charge of the Fine Arts Department at the Punjab University.

Khalid Iqbal had great respect for Sheikh Ahmed's skill and abilities. 'He was a very good draughtsman, an artist who was ignored by historians and art lovers. He deserves better appreciation,' then, with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, Khalid continues, 'Perhaps I'll write about him one day.'

It was around this time that Khalid strengthened his resolve to pursue art. He spent an eventful four years in Aitchison College, Lahore when he was recruited as an art teacher in 1949, his work won him a great deal of appreciation. He became popular among his colleagues and the students, although he had to struggle a little to establish his authority as a teacher because of his youthful appearance. Ijazul Hassan, one of his students at that time, recalls:

'Khalid Iqbal was recruited as an art teacher by Mr Gwyn, the Principal Aitchison College, but the shop keeper at the general store in the college refused to sell him a packet of cigarettes. He could not accept that a person of his demeanour was a teacher and not a junior student. It took a while before people at the school realized that Khalid was really a teacher, but it did not take Khalid Iqbal long to notice that some of the students like Sherbaz Mazari and other notables were older and looked more threatening than he did.'⁵

The important thing about his teaching at that time was his ability to guide students to do what they wanted to do. He made sure that good art material was available and that there was plenty of it, allowing students to use as much of it as they wanted, to experiment with any technique that they needed to investigate. This lowered their inhibitions and encouraged a freedom of expression that is imperative to a successful career in art.

WIDENING HORIZONS

In 1952, Khalid Iqbal left for London to study at the Slade School of Art. This was the first opportunity in his life when he received any formal training, and Khalid regards the years spent at Slade as some of the happiest years of his life. The first few months were spent in bewilderment since everything was new to him but, after a while, he settled in and began to enjoy disciplined study and the freedom of expression that was allowed at the school.

Khalid Iqbal participated in open debate and discussion on prevalent trends in art making, for instance, the longstanding debate over the need for restoring realism to painting or the necessity of moving away from it. One thing he recalls quite clearly: everyone was willing to listen to the point of view of others. Khalid recalls how the days and nights were spent in work. Drawing during the day, then more drawing during the evening class where plenty of models were available and the instructors were always close at hand.

Khalid recalls how each teacher gave his or her own point of view that was sometimes diametrically opposed to that of another. It confused him at first until he realised that they were giving him different perspectives, inviting him to

form his own point of view. This preoccupation with art and art related activity day and night, was invigorating and inspiring but, strangely, Khalid painted very little in England.

He was particularly fond of Constable, but he says he did not feel like painting landscapes even when he visited Constable country. He was awarded the second prize in the 'Steer' landscape competition run by the Slade, but the English landscape never really inspired him. In spite of the ever-present mist and the cold, or the glorious English summer, nothing really found a way to his heart. Khalid completed his diploma at the Slade in 1955 with painting as the major and design as the subsidiary subject.

He returned home more self-assured after having been to one of the best art institutions in Europe and winning acclaim as a landscape painter. On his return to Lahore, the heat and the light of the Punjab plains stirred his imagination and even though initially he painted a number of portraits, he moved more and more towards painting landscapes.

Before leaving for Slade, Anna Molka Ahmad had invited Khalid to join the new Fine Arts Department on his return.

Khalid Iqbal joined the University of the Punjab in 1956 as a Senior Lecturer and worked there right up to 1965. He also wrote a weekly column for *Pakistan Times* as well as the *Civil and Military Gazette* until he realized that his truthful reporting and commentary stirred up controversies that led to his being accosted by seniors in the bureaucracy. Khalid retreated from the public eye since he was then a young man just starting out in life. He also did not have the disposition to spend the rest of his life defending what he wrote.

The presence of Khalid Iqbal at the department attracted other artists from all over Pakistan, some of whom came from Dhaka to Lahore. Murtaza Bashir was one of those who became a frequent visitor at the Fine Arts Department of the Punjab University. Those were interesting days at the University and, as Khalid put it, 'We created something'.

A great deal of vitality was created by the teachers taking classes as well as doing their own work. A discerning and hard working student could benefit greatly from the inspiration provided by the environment. The openness that existed in the department was like a tonic to artists and students. What added to the congenial and creative atmosphere was Khalid's keen sense of humour. He recalls a time when one of the students, Nagori, came to the University wearing a bold, checked shirt. While everyone admired the shirt, Khalid went so far as to express his wish to paint it. Nagori had no choice but to present it to him. Khalid was true to his promise and

produced a beautiful still life with three milky white eggs placed on Nagori's checked shirt. Generally, Khalid is a modest and even-tempered person, hardly ever going so far as to make anyone loose his shirt. Nagori was the only exception.

Then Khalid recalls the time when two artists got into the argument over who was a better painter. Since no amount of logic could prevail to convince them, someone playfully suggested that they should settle the matter through a bout of wrestling. The whole department got into the act and even went as far as designing posters to advertise the wrestling match between Ghulam Rasul and Zulqarnain Haider. It is not clear who won, but the humour and irony provided by this event fuelled the conversation for a long time.

In his art practice, Khalid set the example where paintings were assessed for their merit and not for the value that the market could attach to them. Perhaps that was the reason for the casualness with which the paintings and drawings were handled. He remembers how Zulqarnain Haider once borrowed a stack of drawings done by Khalid to study them at leisure. While they were lying on his table in the room, the paintings caught the eye of an office-boy or peon who thought nothing of the idea of cutting up the thick art paper they were made on, to use them as place mats under glasses of water to save the polished table.

Anna Molka Ahmed, the Department Head, was a strong-minded, energetic woman who influenced the students



1. LANDSCAPE (1954), oil on board, 65 cm x 52.5 cm

Personal Collection

greatly. Her method of applying paint with a palette knife became a very popular technique that students started using. Khalid Iqbal saw to it that they gained wider experience in the medium and were allowed to paint and experiment as they pleased without anyone trying to influence them. He recalls how once Ijazul Hassan finished painting a still life with an ashtray and

stepped back to make a final judgement with a lighted cigarette in his hand. Dissatisfied with his work, he tapped the ash into the ashtray and then, on an impulse, stuck the cigarette to the thick wet paint on the ashtray in the painting. Anna Molka was furious and was ready to demolish the painting there and then but for the restraining influence of Khalid Iqbal who told her gently to lay off.



2. PORTRAIT OF ANNA MALKA AHMAD (early 60s), oil on board, 180 cm x 120 cm

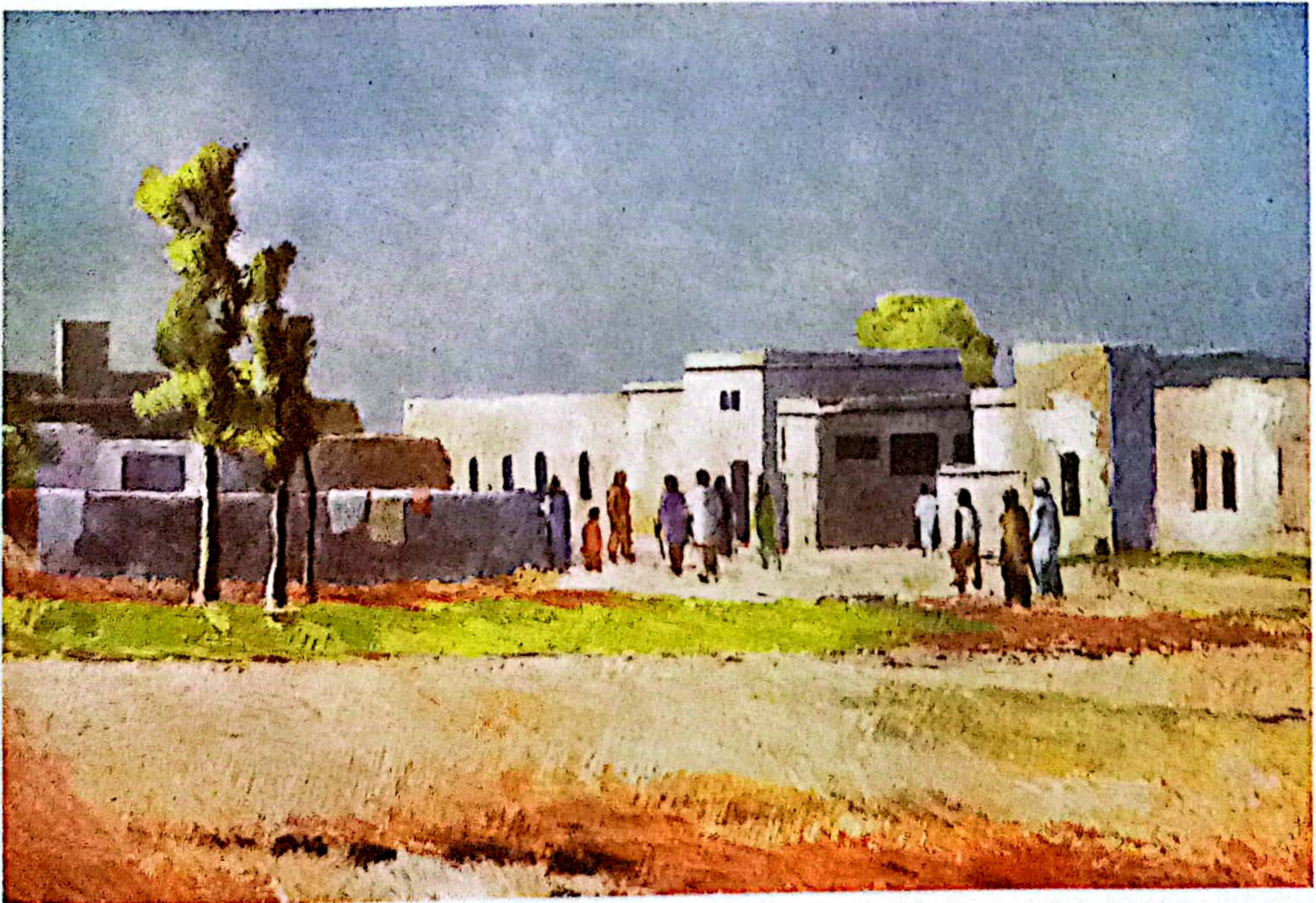
AT THE PUNJAB UNIVERSITY

The presence of Khalid Iqbal at the Punjab University encouraged young men to take up painting as a career. Colin David, Minhas, Ijaz ul Hassan and Soofi Waqar were amongst the first batch. Later came Shaukat Mahmood or Maxim, Khalid Mahmood, Zulqarnain Haider, Ghulam Rasul, Ijaz Anwar and Nagori.

About Khalid as a teacher, Ijazul Hassan writes:

'Mr Khalid Iqbal, my former teacher from

Aitchison, had returned from the Slade in England and was now ensconced in the Fine Arts Department which was quite a vibrant place in those days with people like Moyene Najmi, S. Safdar, Habib Burki, Murtaza Bashir, and Raheel A Javed as regular visitors, but Shakir Ali was the most frequent of them all. In fact, he was a daily visitor. The National College was a brown place in those days and not quite the art place that it became



3. *LANDSCAPE* (1960s), oil on board, 39 cm x 58.5 cm

Collection General Rafi, Islamabad



4. *LANDSCAPE* (1960s), oil on board, 61.5 cm x 49.5 cm

Collection General Rafi

later. I am sure Shakir Ali's daily visit must have provided him a pleasant change from the tedium of teaching at the National College of Arts, recently elevated from the Mayo School of Arts, which was basically a crafts institution, for a chit chat over tea in Mr Khalid's small office. I would occasionally join

them and other visiting artists and men of letters. Occasionally, during the break, we would saunter across to the nearby Coffee House for a mid morning snack, usually comprising of plate full of french-fries or toasted sandwiches stuffed with chicken, eggs, and pickles, a concoction we called the flying saucer.'

Khalid Iqbal never tried to force his views on anyone. He believed that 'a mind that tries to impose itself on others is essentially an inferior one'. Generally a retiring type, he could be quite assertive when it came to defending his beliefs. He was dispassionate and objective in whatever he painted and did not allow his feelings to contaminate his expression. As a teacher, he never allowed students to become complacent about what they believed in but always challenged them to find an alternative point of view, another, fresher opinion. He kept you on your toes, made you reconsider and rethink your position, redefine your thoughts, and thereby opened you up to fresh ideas and perceptions.

It was in this spirit that Khalid Sahib helped me prepare for an art history exam. He sat across the table in the library and we leafed through several illustrated volumes on art discussing artists from many genres and their reproductions. He had his favourites and I had mine. He didn't like Tintoretto. In fact, he didn't care much for the entire Baroque period. He enjoyed the deftness with which Watteau painted textures and surfaces but on the whole found Rococo a trifle shallow. He greatly appreciated Bouche's skill in manipulating paint in expressing surfaces.

He liked, for instance, the conception and the admirable skill demonstrated by the artist in one of his paintings where a young woman is lying bare on her belly



5. PORTRAIT OF COLIN DAVID (1960s), oil on board



6. *LANDSCAPE* (1960s), oil on board, 40.5 cm x 74 cm

Collection General Rafi

and the fluffy sofa cushions are yielding to the weight of her sensuous flesh. To me this was a sensuous painting, to him, a feat of painting. He admired

Chardin for his “pure painting” and not for any episodic value. He could make a common candle look more imposing than a Doric column. We shared our views



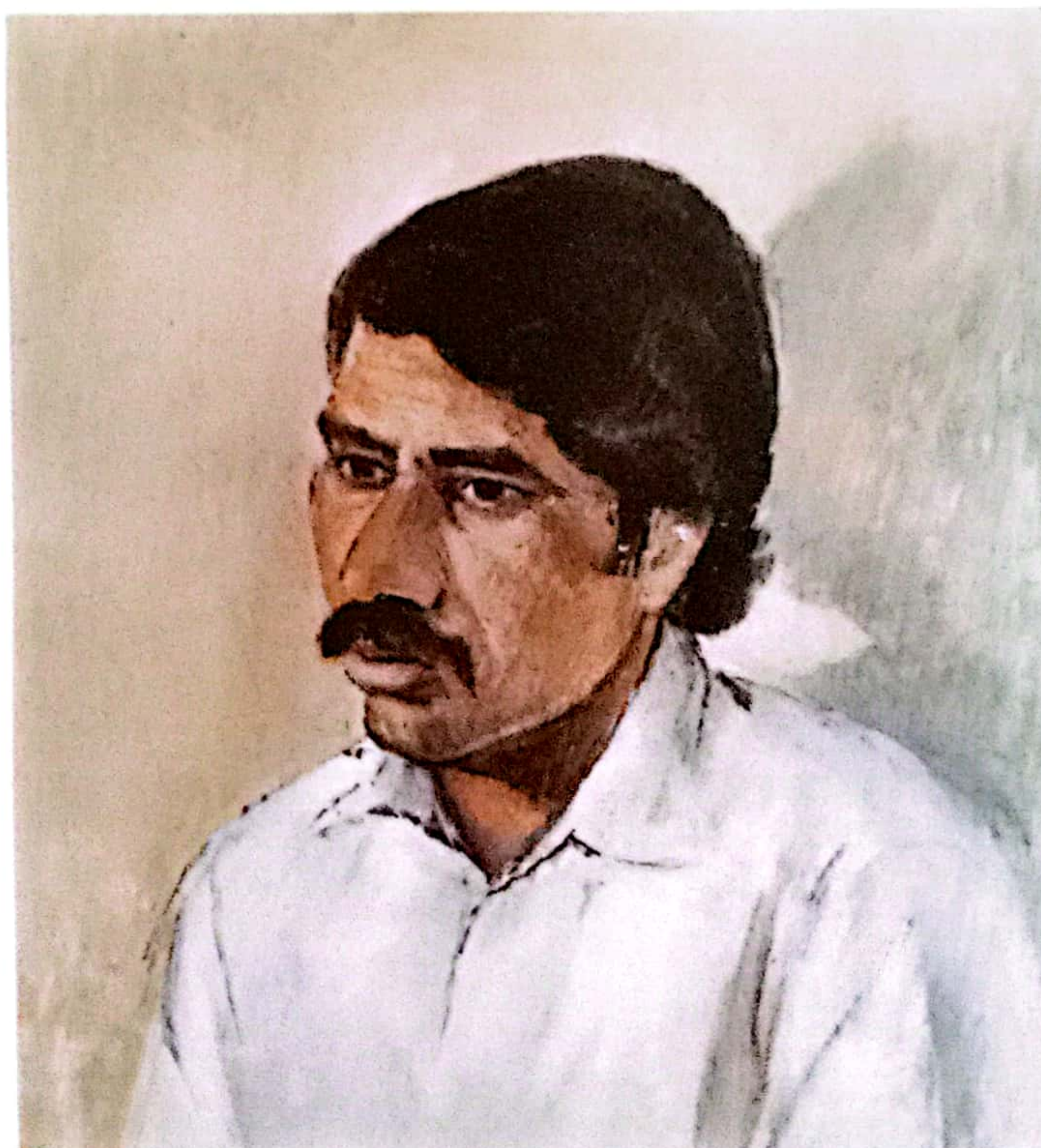
3. *Khalid Iqbal teaching at the Punjab University Fine Arts Department in the early 1960s*

on Velasquez's incredible perception and magical rendering of tone. He found Franz Hals a bit slick, but appreciated the strain of earthly realism in early French painting and had great respect for artists who could draw well, even if they were as varied in technique as Ingress, Degas and Matisse. He didn't particularly care for the German Expressionists, although I was drawn to them for their strong colours and bold treatment of subject. Poussin was fabulous, we both agreed. We also shared similar respect for Modigliani, Giacometti and Mondrian.⁶

Colin David recalls the early days of his association with Khalid Iqbal in the

charming piece that he has written especially for this book.

'It was way back in 1965' he says, 'that I first met Khalid Iqbal at the Fine Arts Department of the Punjab University, when I went for admission to BA Fine Arts. Including me, there were only three boys in the department, so it was natural that in him we found a kindred spirit, as the remaining teachers were women, including the head of the department. He became the focal point of our stay at the department of Fine Arts and much later. He was almost solely in charge of us. Of course, we had other classes in History of Art and Architecture where we were taught by women. When I look



7. PORTRAIT OF MISBAH UDDIN QAZI (late 1960s), 34cm x 32 cm

back and remember the other staff members, I have no regrets. They were all dedicated and did everything to bring us to a level of competence required by the head of the department. It was Khalid Iqbal, in the final analysis, who moulded our minds and thoughts, not just in drawing and painting, for he also taught us European History like no one else.

At that time, I drew quite adequately. My skills were honed by copying photographs of Hollywood greats. When

he took our drawing classes, Mr. Khalid would look over our shoulders and say, 'check the length of the leg', 'check the angle of the arm'. I was always pretty miffed when he made these observations, as my drawing looked pretty accurate to me. The annoying part of it was that when I did check the arm or leg, blast it, he was always right. It still did not make me feel any better or grateful. This state of affairs lasted a few months and my annoyance grew. I began to wonder if he



8. STILL LIFE (1970s), oil on board, 62 cm x 34 cm
Personal Collection



9. LANDSCAPE (1970s), oil on board, 58 cm x 30 cm
Collection Mr. & Mrs. Yawar Ali



10. PORTRAIT (1970s), oil on board, 43 cm x 31.5 cm

Personal Collection

could draw as well as he taught. Then, one day, as I settled down for the drawing class, I saw a sheet of paper lying around carelessly, a most exquisite drawing of a kneecap and part of a leg. It was a small drawing, but it spoke volumes. I immediately asked Mr Khalid Iqbal whose drawing it was, with open admiration tinged with jealousy because,

as far as drawing was concerned, I considered myself the big noise.

Mr Khalid casually explained to me that it was a rough sketch that he had made. My opinion of him rocketed sky high. Whether he had sensed my hostility till then and in a quiet unobtrusive way placed the drawing where I could see it, I don't know. It was his way of doing

things, he put me in my place, a place that I occupy to this day.⁷

Dr Ijaz Anwar still remembers the meticulous honesty with which Khalid carried out his teaching assignments. He was always very committed to the students and never took leave of absence from work. In class, he constantly moved around, resting only when the model rested. He would first offer encouragement and then criticize the work of a student, always insisting the need to observe things more clearly and avoid dramatic effects. Although he was gentle and encouraging of students' works, he never accepted any excuses for lack of work. When Ijaz Anwar tried to get out of a landscape assignment by telling Khalid that the visibility was poor and the weather was cloudy that day, Khalid sternly told him that in any condition the drawing did not change.⁸

He had a remarkable memory for names and charmed his students by remembering them by name years later. There have been a number of students for whom he secretly provided financial support. With his students, he maintained the grace of adult treatment, offering cigarettes to those heart warming who smoked, but never allowed them to pay for tea or snacks when he was around.

Many people came to see Khalid at the University, some of whom formed the Lahore Art Group later. There was Anwar Jalal Shemza, Moyene Najmi, S Safdar, Ali Imam, Raheel Akbar Javed and Habib Burki who were daily visitors at the University. The two young women

in the group, Maryam Habib and Razia Feroze, came less frequently. Murtaza Bashir who came to Lahore for an exhibition stayed on for more than a year because of the conducive atmosphere he found here. He was a frequent visitor at the Department where Khalid painted his life-sized portraits.

Khalid Iqbal remembers painting many life-sized portraits at that time, including the large one of Anna Molka Ahmed, seated rather sedately in a red shirt. All his portraits were meticulously drawn, correct to the last detail in drawing and tone of colour. He did not try to register any emotion in the model and depended on a typical pose to portray character. The painting was done in thin layers with only turpentine used to mix the paints, and the application was done in a uniform cross hatch brush stroke that is typical of his earlier paintings.

That was the only time in his life that Khalid Iqbal painted large canvasses and also the only time that he painted in a place where he was teaching. While he worked at the University, Khalid painted the portrait of Anna Molka Ahmed, Murtaza Bashir, Moyene Najmi, Ghulam Rasul, Nagori, and a double portrait of Zulqarnain and Khalid Mahmood. Many people came to the department because they found a stimulating atmosphere there, while others came to have their portraits painted. Sufi Tabassum, the famous poet, initially came for a sitting but returned only when his sculpture and painting, being made by Anna Molka, were finished. Shakir Ali often



11. PORTRAIT OF MURTAZA BASHIR, the East Pakistani artist who came to live in Lahore, (early 1960s)
oil on board, 180 cm x 120 cm

ambled across from the National College to join in on the discussions. Anna Molka Ahmed did not really like the presence of these people at the Department because she was afraid their modern approach to painting would derail the more academic concepts that she wanted her students to acquire.

When the Alhamra Arts Council started evening classes in painting and drawing in 1960, Khalid Iqbal started teaching at the temporary location for these classes. He was joined there by Anna Molka and Ms Nasim Hafiz Qazi. This space provided an alternate space for artists and intellectuals to get together in the evening because of its convenient location and beautiful setting, the

spacious lawn with three tall pine trees adding a perfect ambience to the arched old building. All artists interested in an exchange of views on work with other artists, dropped in and stayed for a cup of tea and an occasional *samosa*. The discussions of the morning at the Fine Arts Department, carried over into the evening. Plans were made for holding exhibitions. Heated debates took place over issues of art with no one willing to give way to the other's point of view easily. The evenings invariably ended with a party at one place or the other, for which the standard procedure was to collect five Rupees each from anyone who wished to come. The evenings usually began with intellectual



12. LANDSCAPE (1970s), oil on board, 57 cm x 74 cm

Collection Hayat Furnitures

pleasantries but proceeded to become quite unruly, so much so, that by the time people left, there was so much hard feeling that artists were unwilling to travel in the same vehicle. Oftentimes, the quarrel was over frivolous issues and several apologies were exchanged in the morning.

Ijazul Hassan writes in the *Daily Times*, 'Murtaza Bashir, Safdar, Anna Molka, Khalid Iqbal and others put up a solo or a group show. Artists were quite outspoken in volunteering comments without fear of breaking friendships or getting a punch on the nose. ...If anyone saw Khalid Iqbal today, he would not believe that he could hurt a fly. Apparently he could. Raheel once revealed to me that Khalid could hook and throw a straight one in his youth. I find this hard to believe it of Khalid.'⁹

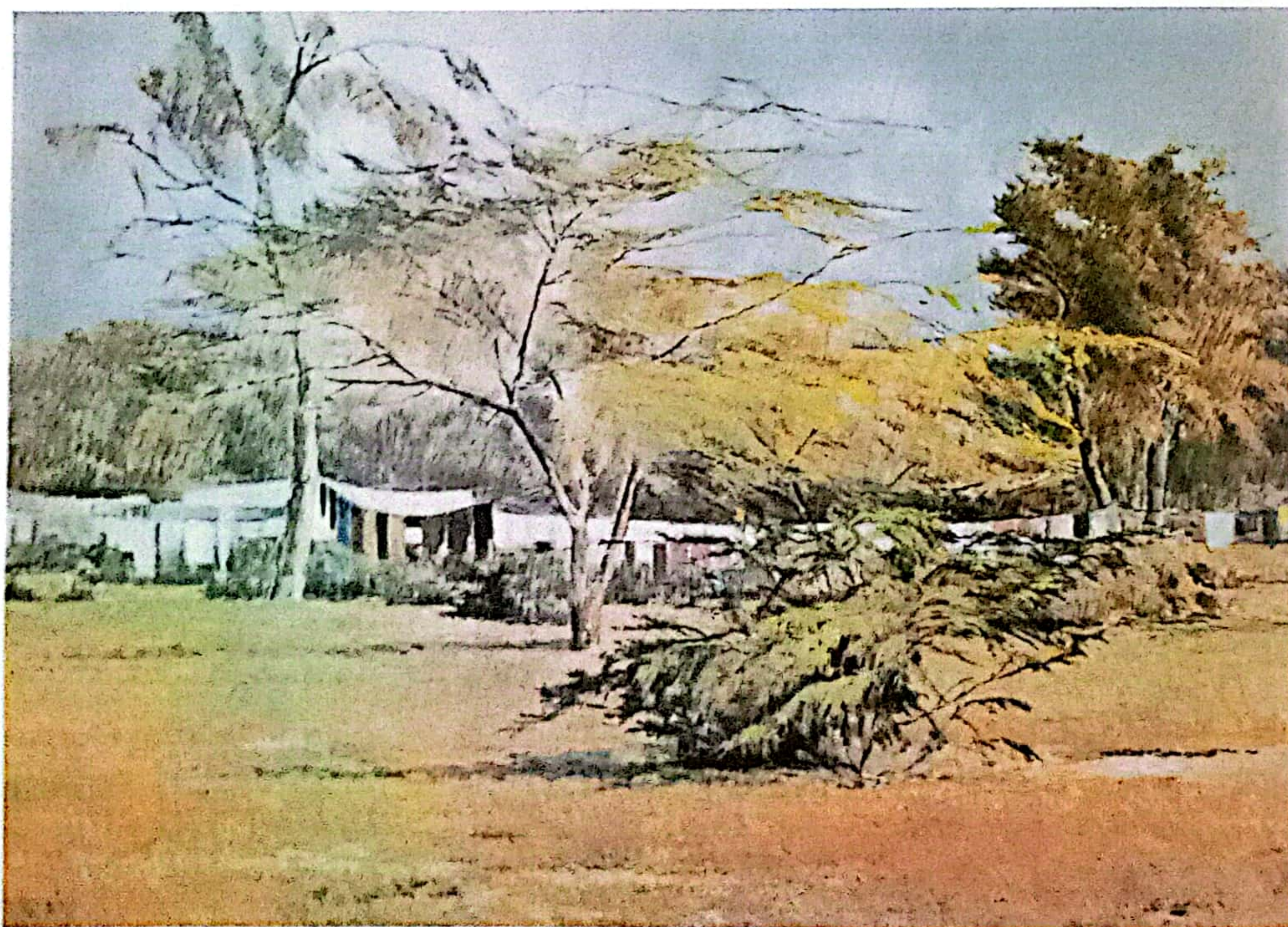
Khalid Iqbal was a very shy person and a bit of a bohemian who spurned

formal occasions. He tried to avoid visitors that were not artists or friends, and formal occasions like the opening of exhibitions at the Department where dignitaries were invited to open the exhibition. Students of that era recall the time when General Ayub Khan was invited to inaugurate an exhibition at the department. Khalid was nowhere to be seen. He had been brow beaten into wearing a tie for the occasion and word had gone round the department announcing the fact that Khalid Iqbal was wearing a tie. Mischievous students found one excuse after another to go to the room where Khalid was sitting ill at ease and for once totally not in control of the situation. He made his public appearance wearing a tie as brief as the dictates of politeness would allow, and removed it as soon as the exalted guest left the scene.

AT THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ARTS

When Khalid said 'We created something', he was referring to the energy and enthusiasm that teachers generated among students, making them feel like they were part of the action of the art world but a terrible event shook the foundations not only of the Fine Arts Department but also the relationship between friendly colleagues and fellow artists. Anna Molka, who had presided

over the Department for decades and can be regarded as the founding Mother of the institution, was embroiled in a family dispute that somehow involved the faculty. The painter, Colin David, who had joined the faculty after topping in MA, wished to marry Zara, Anna Molka's daughter. Mrs Ahmed did not approve of the match and expected Khalid Iqbal to intervene. Khalid felt that it was not



13. CLOTHESLINE, LANDSCAPE (1976), oil on board, 64 cm x 89 cm

Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmad



14. SELF PORTRAIT (1970s), oil on board, 43 cm x 30 cm Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal

his business and declined to become a party to the dispute. Besides, Khalid saw nothing wrong in the match. One thing led to another and, finally, Khalid Iqbal decided to terminate his relationship with the Department, which he considered to be his first love. Naseem

Hafiz Qazi, another talented artist and dedicated teacher, also left and so did Colin David.

Almost instantly, what the Department had acquired in terms of skill and teaching expertise over the decades deteriorated into mediocrity. In

retrospect, it seems that the Fine arts Department never fully recovered from this sudden severing of the middle order to this day, because inexperienced junior teachers were inducted into positions that they were not trained or equipped to occupy at that time.

When Khalid resigned from the University in 1965, Shakir Ali, the Principal of National College of Arts, immediately offered him a teaching position on the Fine Arts faculty. At that time, Shakir Ali was trying to build an institution of art along the lines delineated by the Bauhaus. In the spring term of 1965, he appointed Khalid Iqbal as a visiting lecturer, but by December

the same year, this was changed to Head of the Fine Arts Department. Shakir Ali had contacted people of excellence all over the world in an effort to upgrade the staff at the College and asked them to join him in creating a centre of standing and stature for Pakistan. He was pleased that Khalid Iqbal was available and also asked Colin David, Ijaz ul Hassan, and Kamil Khan Mumtaz to join the faculty. Khalid was to head the painting department, Ijaz ul Hassan, the academics department, and Kamil Khan Mumtaz, who was in Ghana at the time, the architecture department.

Khalid did not immediately adjust to the National College as he had done at

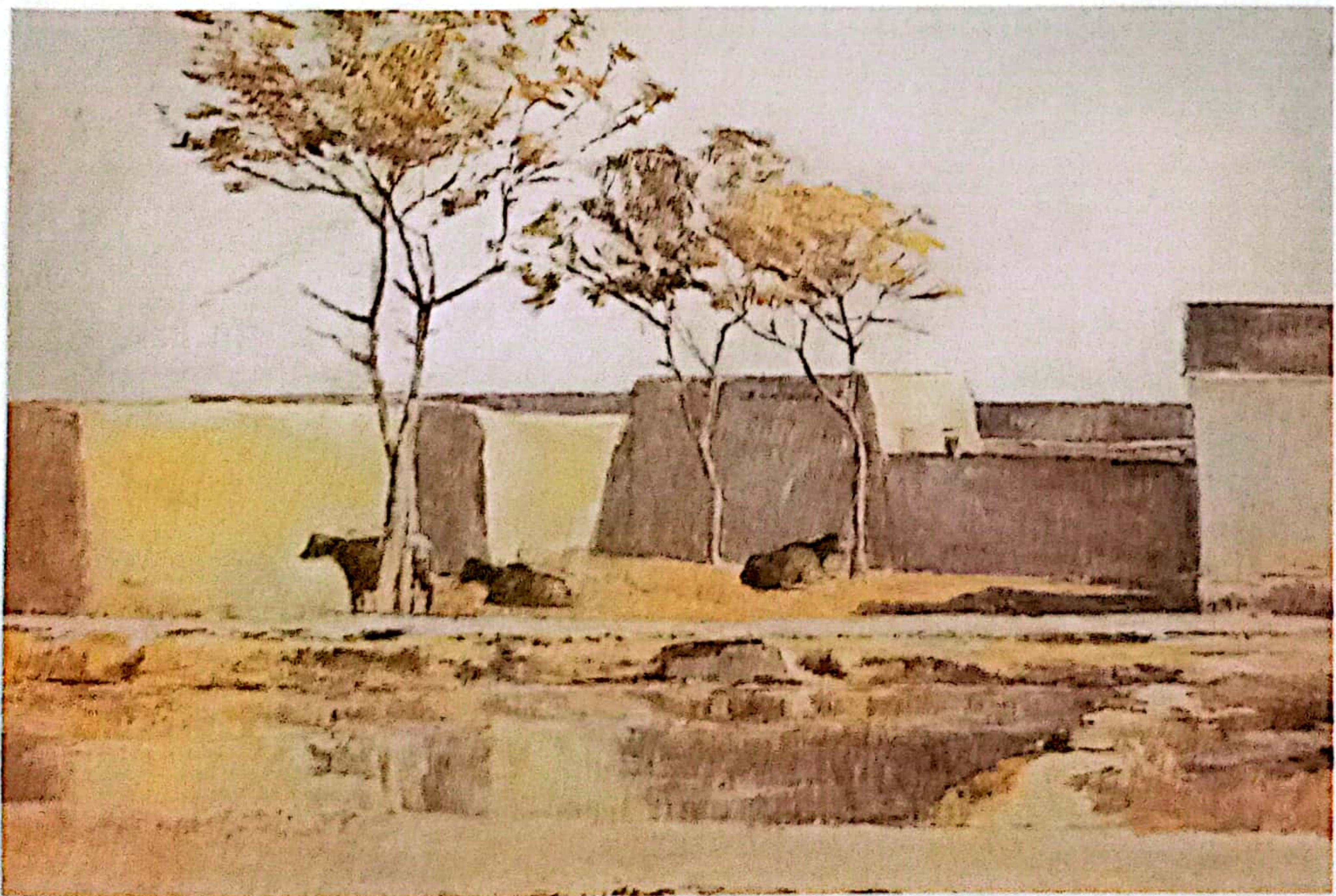


4. Professor Khalid Iqbal conducting Empress Farah Diba of Iran at an Exhibition of paintings in the National College



15. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 60 cm x 75 cm

Collection Mustansar Hussain Tarar



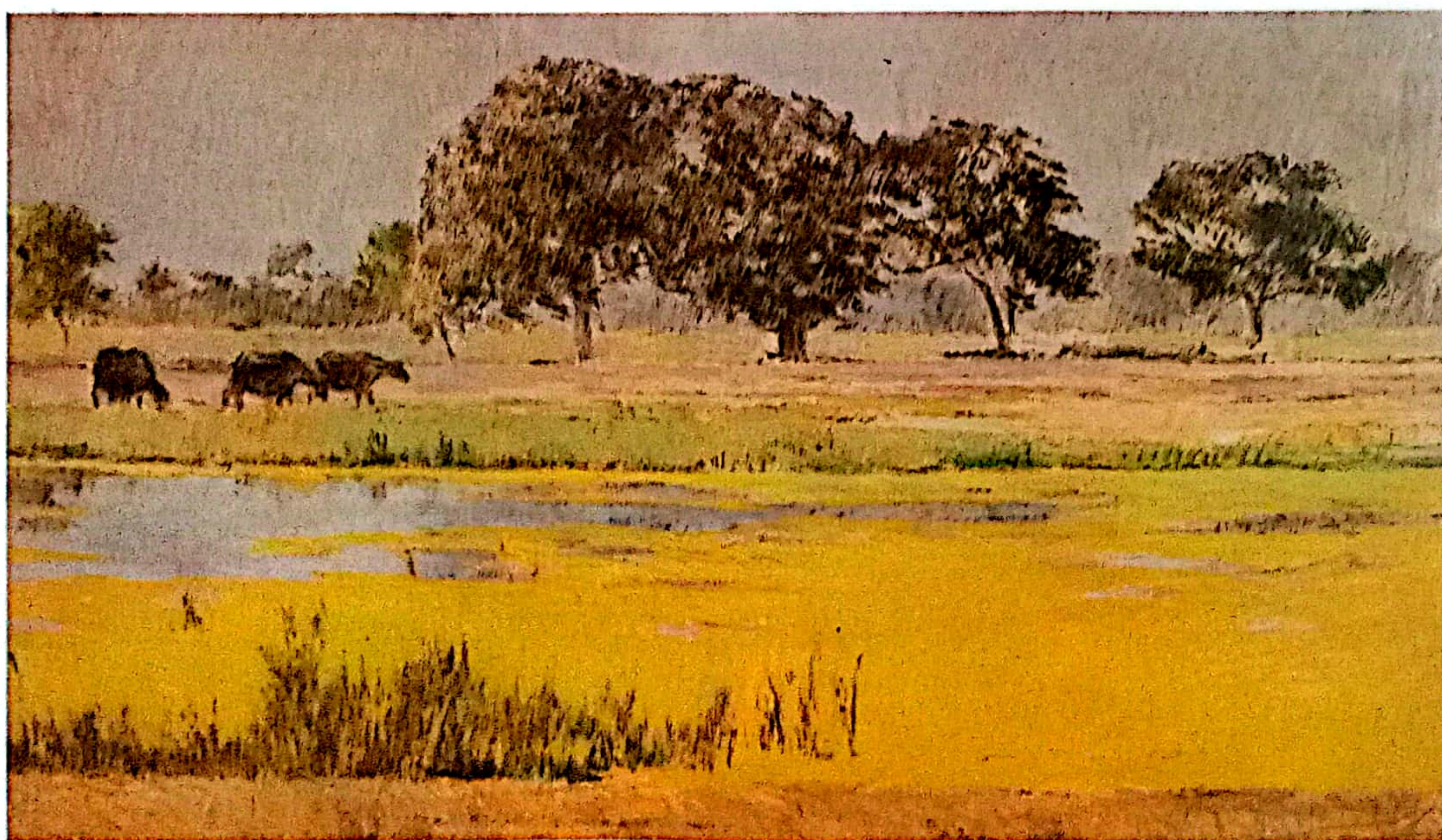
16. LANDSCAPE OF KOTHA PIND (1978), oil on board, 39.5 cm x 56 cm

Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmad

the University. 'It was a bigger place', he says. Khalid Iqbal had a number of students who later made a name for themselves in the field of painting. Among them, Iqbal Hussain, Ghulam Mustafa, and Bashir Ahmed are well-known. Iqbal Hussain became well known for his paintings of huge life sized human figures made with a great deal of expertise and painterly skill. Ghulam Mustafa chose landscape as his special mode of expression and created a reputation for himself, while Bashir Ahmed's claim to fame is his ability to resurrect the teaching of miniature painting, thereby reviving one of the much-revered traditional arts of South Asia. He was able to inspire students to learn the old techniques and to practice them with a new sensibility. Some of his students have excelled in the field and put this genre on the map of the art

world.

With his students, Khalid had an extremely relaxed attitude and allowed them a lot of freedom to express themselves according to their temperament. His students recall how he dealt with situations that could have become awkward. For instance, once a girl complained about a boy teasing her, he advised the boy to limit his teasing to an extent that the girl did not have to complain. His students remember his absent-mindedness with a great deal of affection. He once turned up in class with two different sorts of shoes. His absent-mindedness was reflected in the way he drove a car. Mustafa recalls the time when Khalid sahib had a flat tyre and was driving around in that condition oblivious to the attempts of passers-by to attract his attention and point to the flat tyre. His students had to take drastic



17. *LANDSCAPE (1981), oil on board, 34 cm x 60 cm*

Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmad



18. *LANDSCAPE* (1980s), oil on board

measures before he was made aware of the situation.¹⁰

Iqbal Hussain remembers the part Khalid played in his transformation into a painter. He was an aggressive young man who came from a violent and abusive background. Khalid recalls how Iqbal belligerently wore knuckle-dusters in College. When Iqbal was brought to the National College for admission, he took the exercise quite casually and remembers missing the English test required for entrance, which would normally have disqualified him. Contrary to his expectations, he was called for an interview and later admitted to the

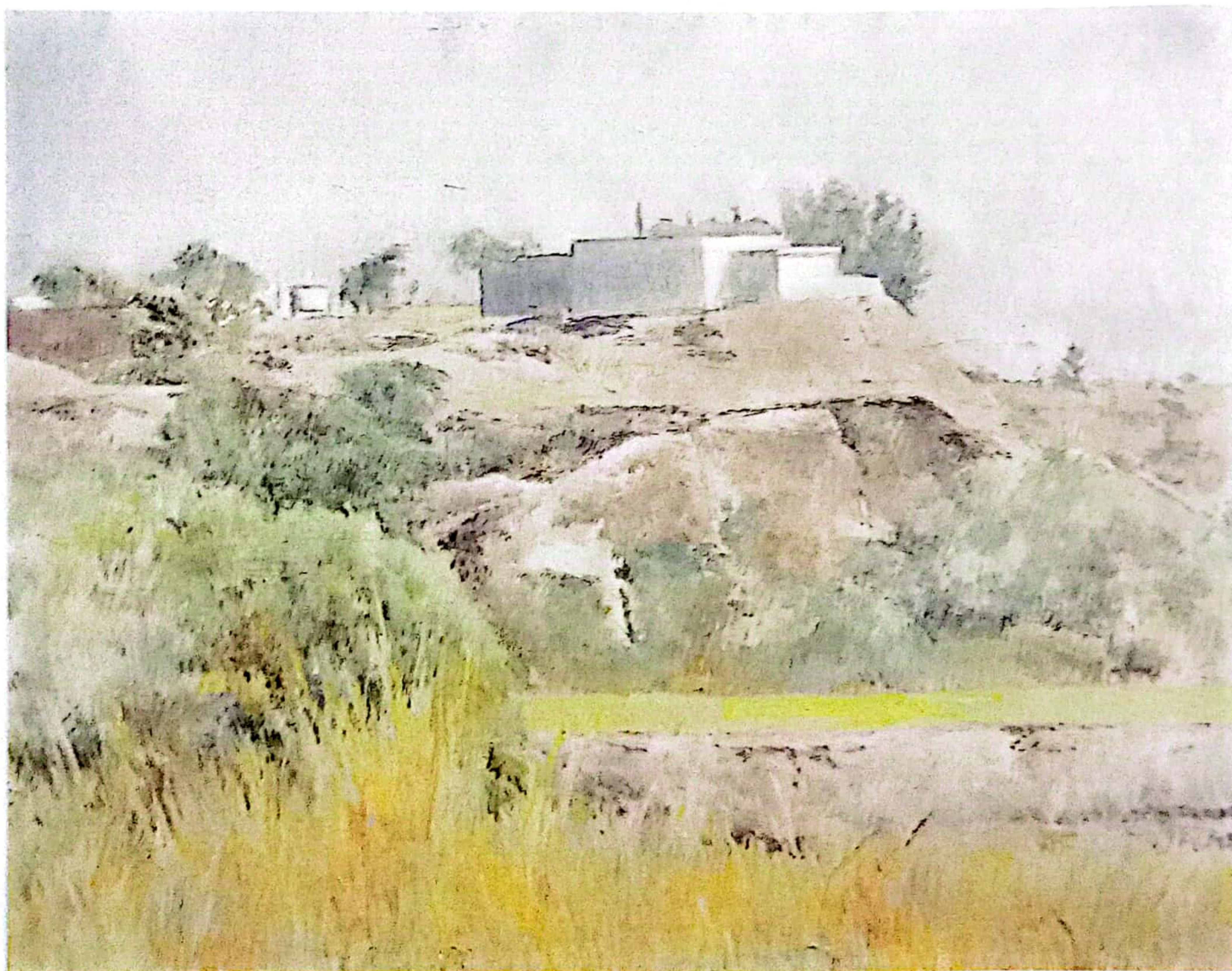
College because his talent was recognised by the team of interviewers of which Khalid was a member. His first lesson with Khalid Iqbal was in the second year, when Hussain remembers doing a bad still-life. Khalid did not allow anyone to laugh at him and encouraged him to do better.

Iqbal once brought his cousin to model for the life-drawing exam. After finishing his own work, he threatened his cousin with dire consequences if he came back again to allow the others to finish their drawings. Iqbal recalls Khalid's patience and tolerance of him even when, according to his own confession, he was

being mean and competitive. Iqbal remembers the time when Khalid Iqbal travelled a long distance by bus to come and look at his new works.¹¹

With the retirement of Shakir Ali in March, 1974, Khalid Iqbal officiated as the Principal of NCA and was later appointed Acting Principal in the same year. After repeated requests by him to be relieved of these duties, he was allowed to revert back to being the head of the Fine Arts Department in 1976.

Khalid Iqbal was awarded the fellowship of the NCA during the centenary celebrations in 1976 and the Quaid-i-Azam Award in painting in 1977 by the Pakistan National Council of the Arts, Islamabad. He was promoted to the status of a full Professor in 1979 with effect from 1976, but very soon after, in December 1980, he took long leave for one year at the end of which he sent in his resignation.



19. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 72 cm x 56 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Yawar Ali



20. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 74 cm x 62 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal



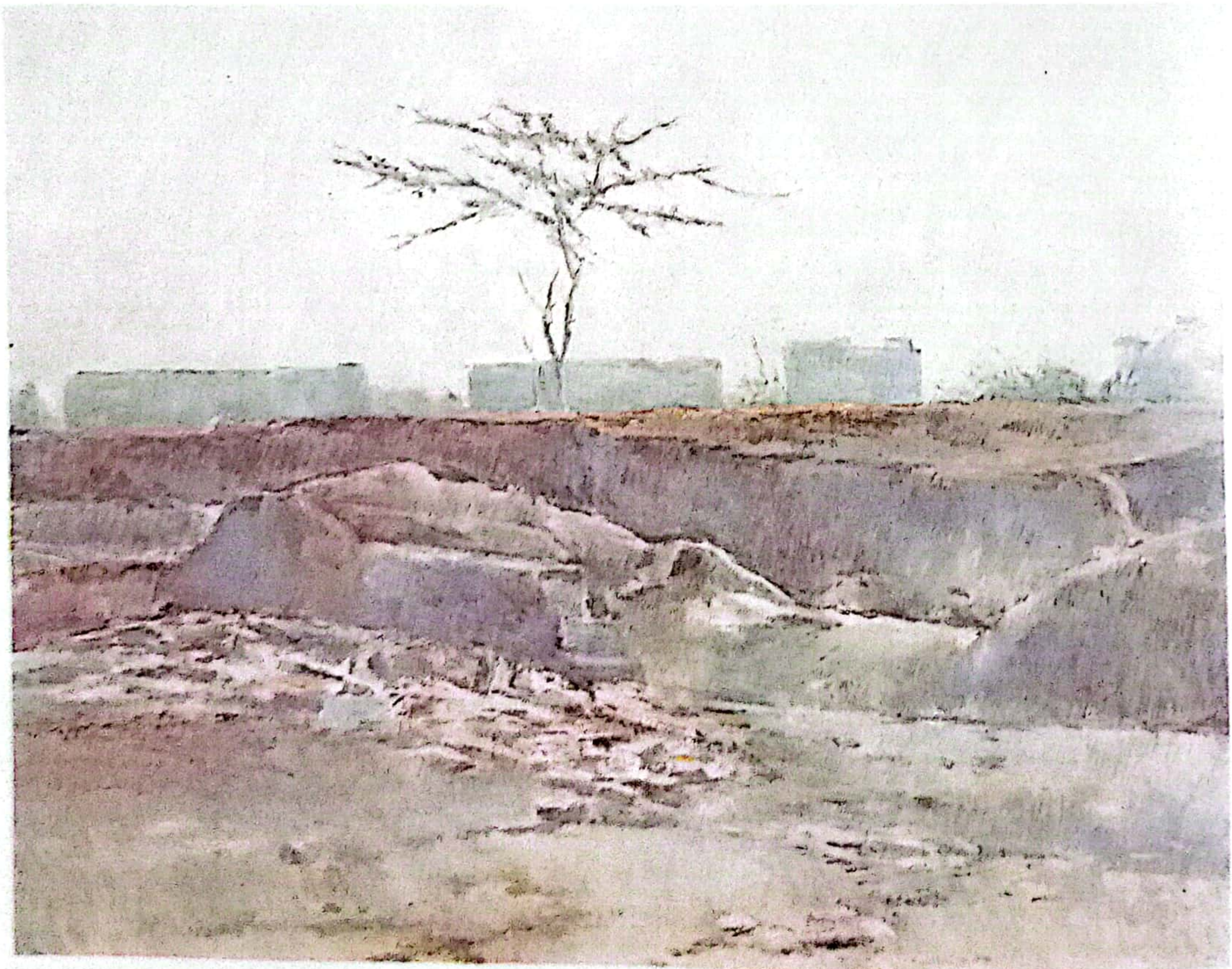
21. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 44 cm x 62 cm

Personal Collection

POST NINETEEN EIGHTIES

This was the first time in his life that Khalid enjoyed the luxury of being able to paint full time, without having to worry about how his classroom commitments had to be met and how to schedule other peoples' work load. We can see the difference. His relaxation allowed him to eliminate details that cluttered. Even his lines became less

distinct and seemed to merge more and more in a misty background. Khalid Iqbal has never held a solo exhibition. The only time he exhibited in anything but a group show was when he had a two-man show with Habib Burki while teaching at the University. His early paintings display a distinct diagonal brushstroke that developed into a subtle



22. *LANDSCAPE* (1980s), oil on board, 68 cm x 63 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal



23. *PORTRAIT* (1970s), oil on board

Collection Shehla Saigol

crosshatch over the years. The most vivid recollection of his earlier landscapes seems to be his natural inclination to choose spots where the light falling on the sides of small mud houses reflects brilliantly against the dull mauve

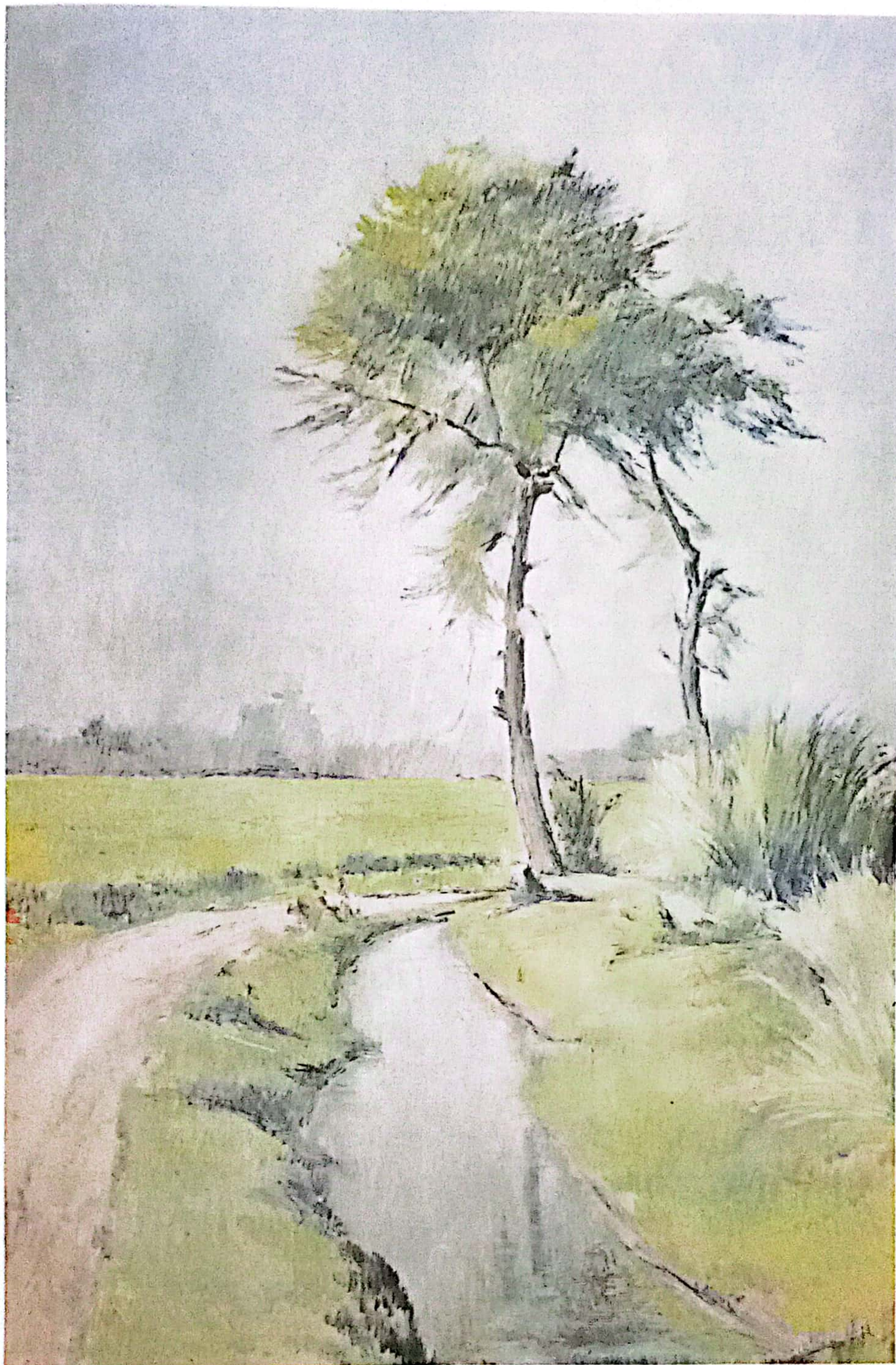
shadows that fall on the shady side of the houses. These houses made a pattern of sunshine that left the colour of the shadow unnoticed until much later. Then he realised that it was the perfect juxtapositioning of these colours that



24. *LANDSCAPE* (1984), oil on board, 51cm x 25cm
Personal Collection

gave the sunlit surface such brilliance and the shadows such a deep and soothing presence. Often, these houses are next to pools of stagnant water or at the edge of a field in the upper half of his picture while the lower half is given

to the masterly rendering of varying foregrounds. Very often, it is a piece of fallow land that has dry ochre grass growing near its ditches, the rest of the landscape being marked by salt and salinity.

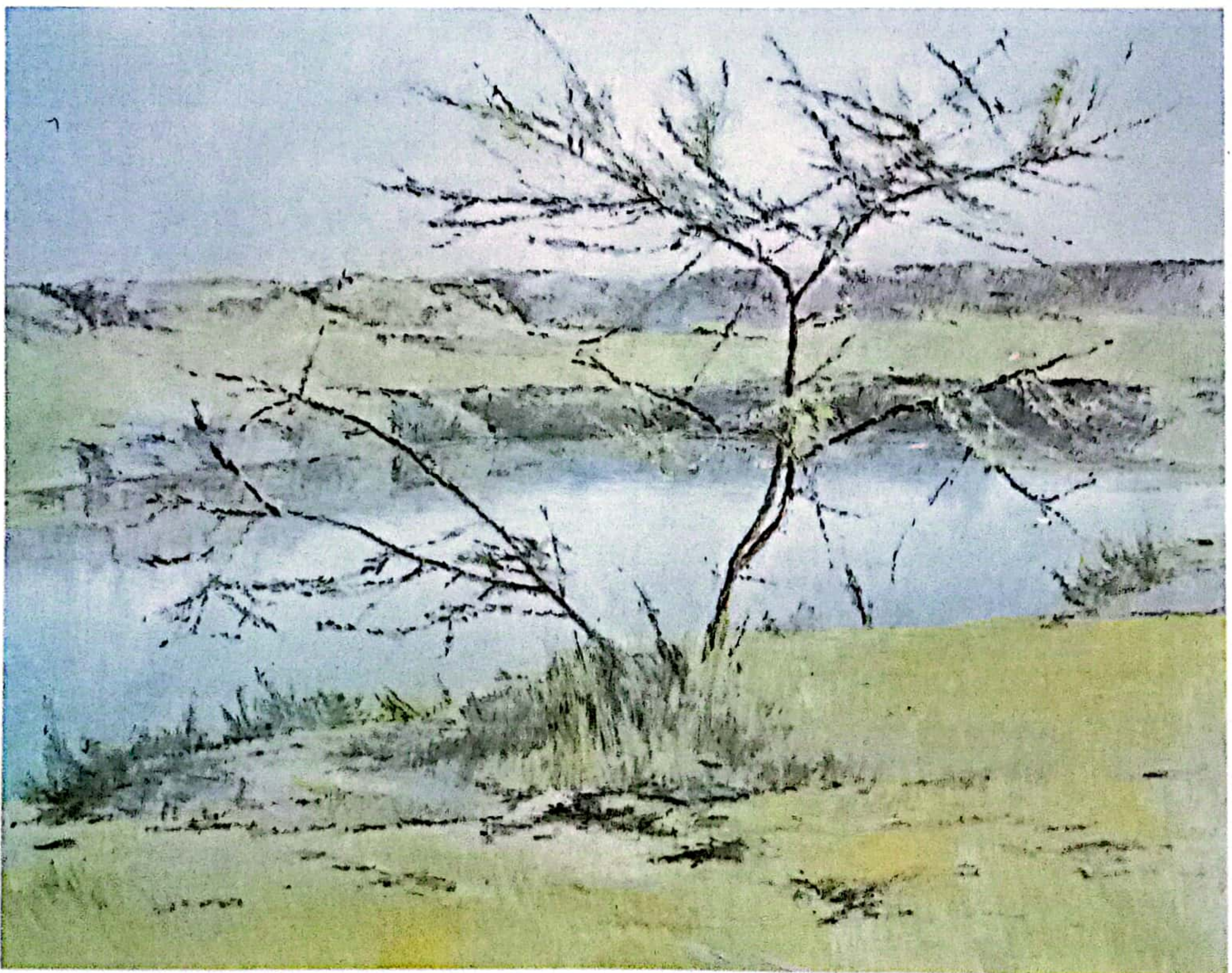


25. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 52 cm x 45 cm

Collection Tamkanet Shahid



26. LANDSCAPE OF SAMSANI VILLAGE (1982), oil on board, 35 cm x 57 cm Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmad



27. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 62 cm x 53 cm Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal



28. PORTRAIT (1980s), oil on board, 35 cm x 27 cm

Personal Collection

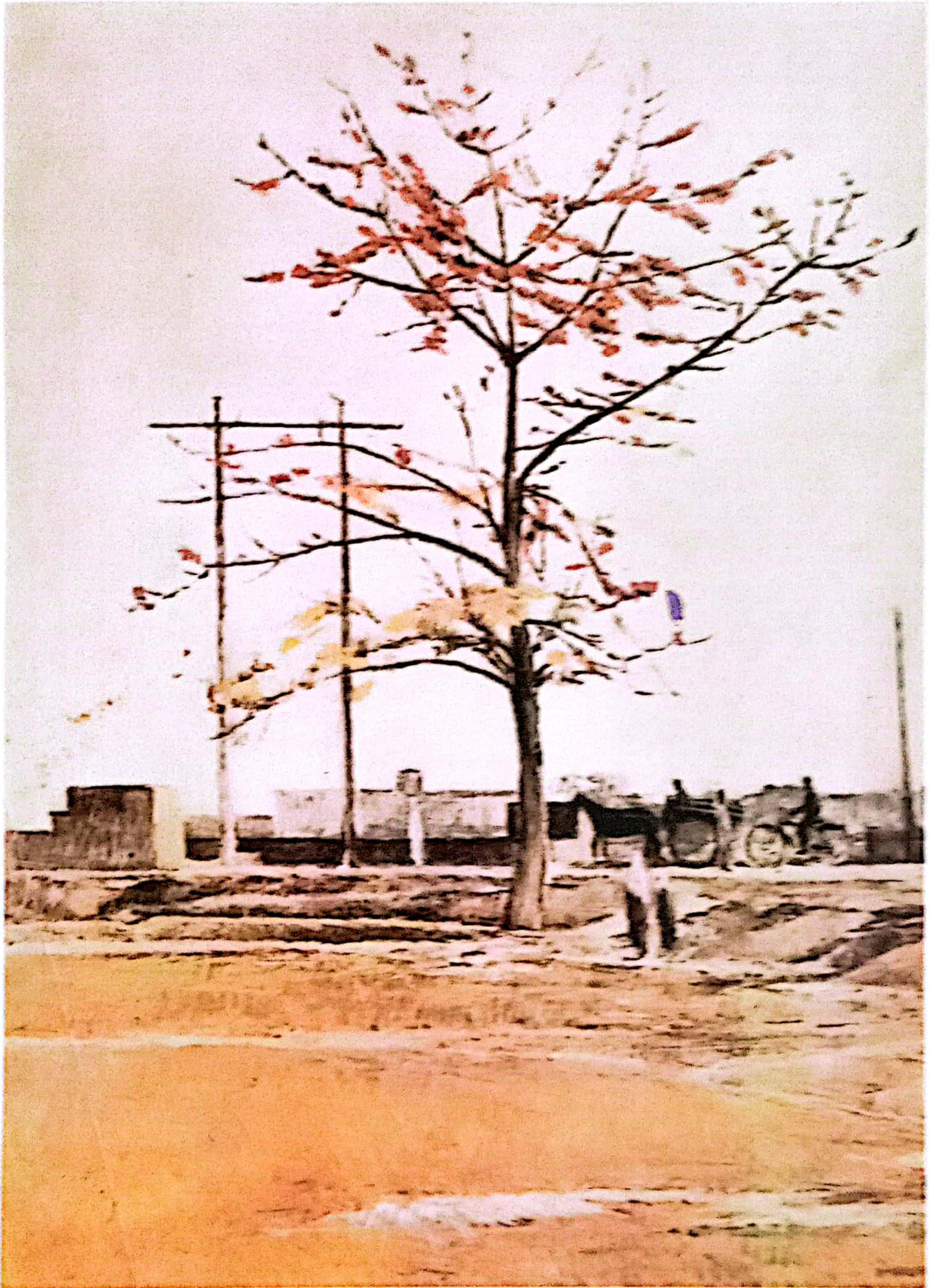


29. PORTRAIT (1980s), oil on board,
30 cm x 39.5 cm Personal Collection



30. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 59 cm x 54 cm

Collection Mustansar Hussain Tarar



31. *LANDSCAPE* (1980s), oil on board, 61 cm x 44 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Yassar Ali



32. *LANDSCAPE* (1980s), oil on board, 47.5 cm x 62.5 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Yawar Ali

These foregrounds have been associated with Khalid's paintings for a long time and nobody has come close to painting them as he does. On many occasions, there is a solitary tree in the middle distance somewhere, generally it is the hardy Acacia or Kikar that seems to be the only life form that celebrates the rugged countryside in which it so proudly stands. Khalid's deft brush stroke and his superb eye for tone creates miles of distance in a small area of his canvas. His later works have mellowed the vigour of the strokes and the paintings have acquired a smoother texture that depends more on the tones of colour for their subtle variation.

Mohammad Athar Tahir writes in his book *Pakistan Colours*:

'Known widely for his landscapes of Lahore's marginal areas or the singular rendering of Hampstead, London, he has also produced important if limited number of still-lives and portraits.

The consistency of vision and execution unites his subjects. The same predominantly austere and intense perception pervades all his work. Refined brush strokes, studied and subtle texture of paint, sweeping but controlled use of palette knife and application of thin oil paint contribute towards an organic style. His style emerges from within his work and is not



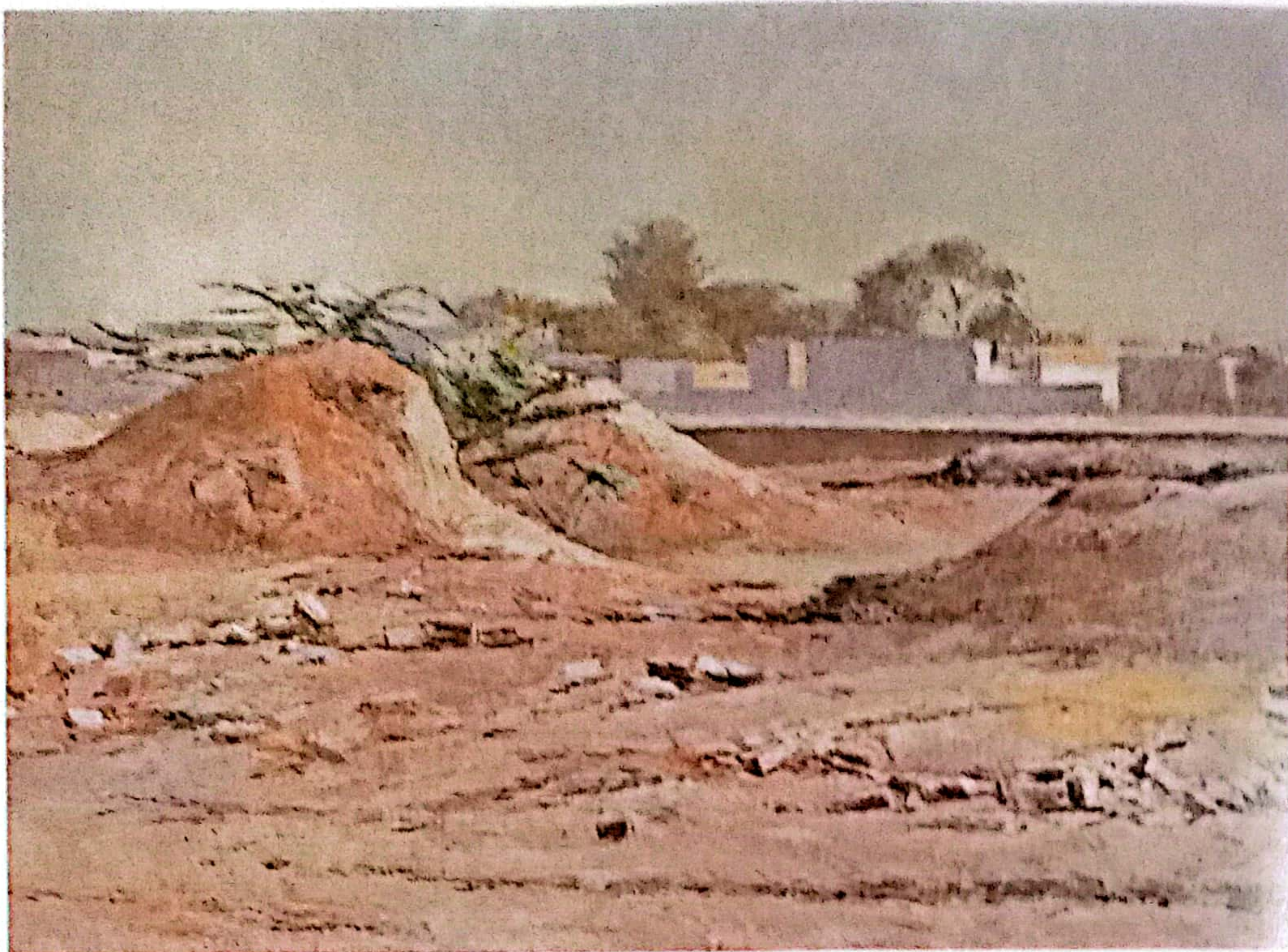
33. *LANDSCAPE* (1980s), oil on board, 69 cm x 62 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal

an external imposition.

The thin oil paint execution is reminiscent of William Coldstream, one of his teachers at and the Principal of the Slade, and whose influence the artist has often acknowledged. By preferring the common, Khalid Iqbal not only makes a social statement but obliges one to

look at the work rather than its extra-artistic aspects. Landscape painting occupies a central place in achievement and reputation. His landscapes are 'landscapes of fact'. They portray, in Kenneth Clark's phrase, 'recognisable experience'. The freshness of his landscape lay, and lies in their



34. ABANDONED BRICK KILN (Oct. 1992), oil on board, 71 cm x 59 cm

Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmad



35. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 64 cm x 53 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal



36. *LANDSCAPE (1990s)*, oil on board, 63 cm x 70.2 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Mansha



37. *BULLRUSHES (1990s)*, oil on board

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Tariq Saigol



38. *LANDSCAPE* (1980s), oil on board, 54 cm x 69 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Najam Sethi

immediacy. The subject is observed directly and painted on the spot, in situ. It is a recognisable, initialised view. His standard is the high standard he has set himself, a standard in the best tradition of Western realists like Velasquez and Constable.

Khalid Iqbal's landscapes avoid the scenic, the picturesque, the pretty. They focus on the essential, the ordinary. His subjects—bushes, trees, rain-filled ditches, pools of water and floating algae, saline stretches, trees whether dry or in flower, dilapidated brick-kilns, tombs and shrines and village mud-mosques—are observed in tonal detail and rendered

with meticulous nuances of tints. The composite of strokes of colour marks of brush, therefore, approximate the observed, ordinary subject and elevate it to the condition of art.

The core concern, however, is more elusive. It is light. Light perceived in climatic variations of the atmosphere and the changing moods of nature. Light in its fleeting moments: tremulously early on the weathered water-edge illuminating some areas, throwing others into deeper shadows, dawn tentatively touching the rough undulations, swift twilight as it lingers on and lifts off the uneven, overgrown ground, or when



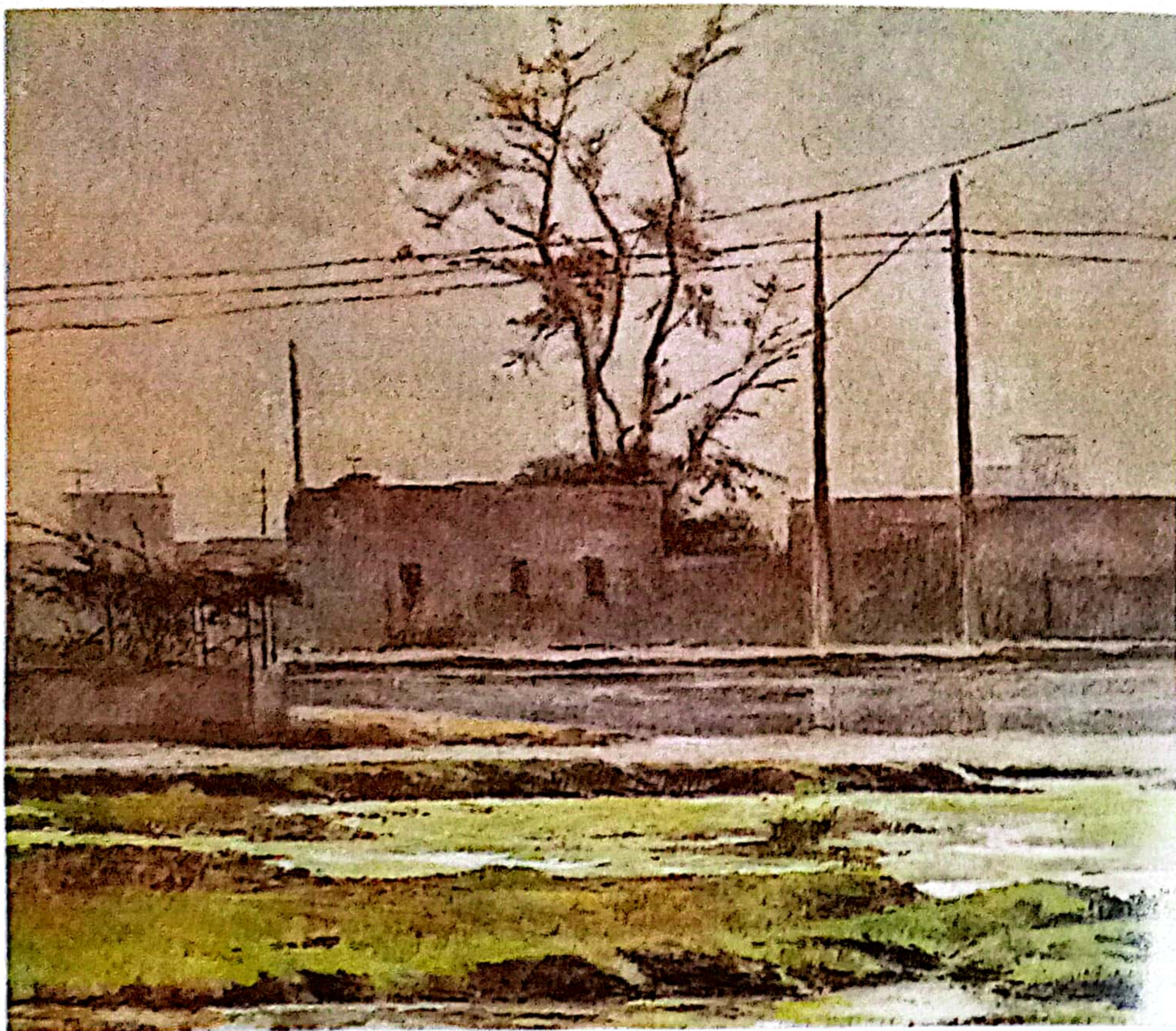
39. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 45 cm x 55 cm

Collection Mrs. Kramet



40. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 49 cm x 60 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Dr. Zafar Aziz



41. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board,

Collection Yousaf Khan

morning mist lies low in the winter grass or hovers in the trees or near buildings, or blurs wild bushes among grass dried ochre by rainless days. Such transience is captured without sentimentality, deftly. These moments are seen in their actuality, their entirety. The eye does not see as it should. The eye sees what there is.¹²

Khalid Iqbal is a person who has had an immense impact on the painting and painters of Lahore. In his shy, inimitable way, he has helped carve the future styles of so many of his students who began by trying to copy his brush stroke.

Since his natural ability to render tone surpassed anyone else's, they were forced to evolve other styles more suited to their talents. In the words of Dr. Macella Nesom,

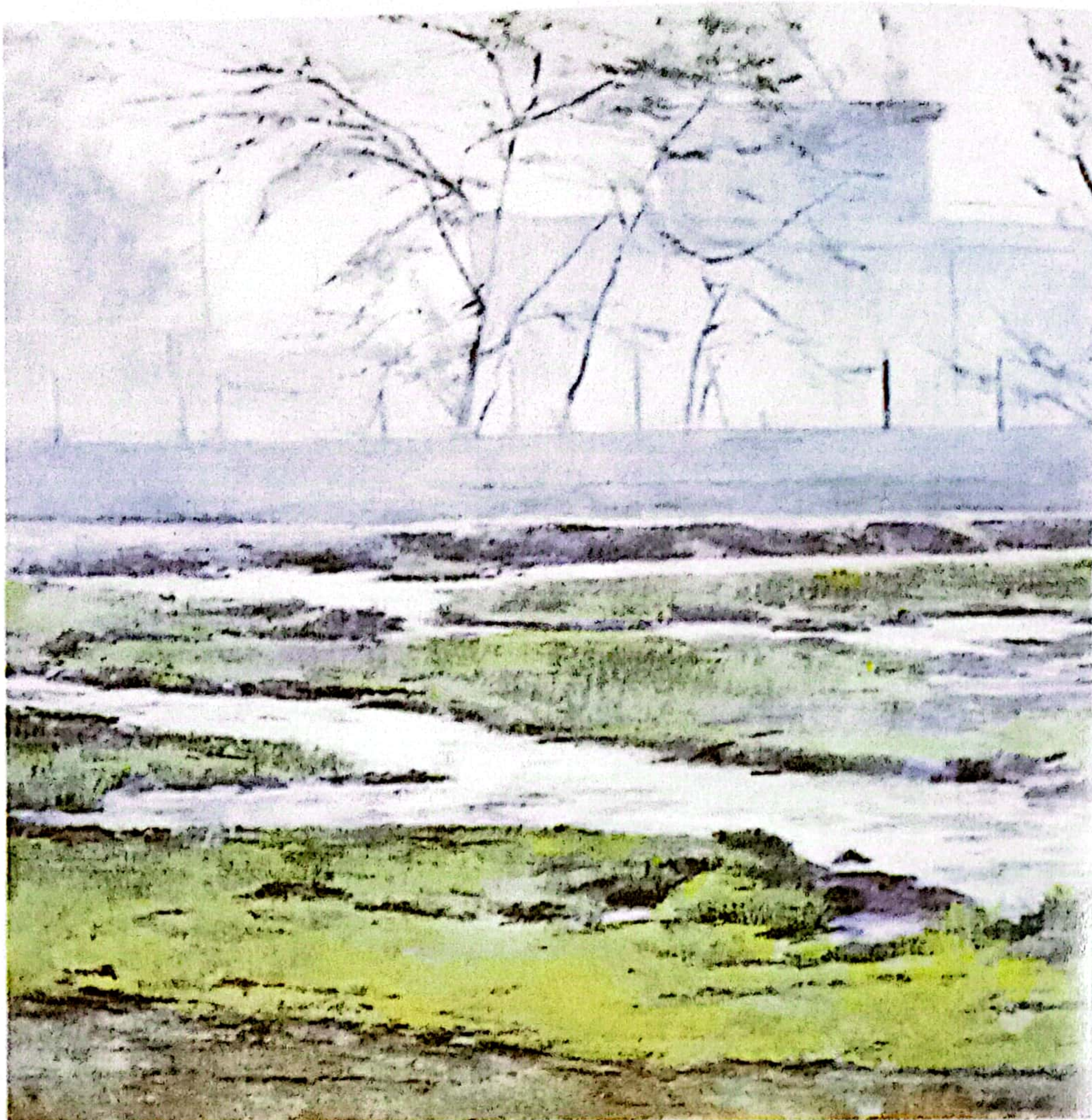
'From the late fifties when painters were imitating Cubism to inter-nationalise their art, Khalid Iqbal taught his students at the Punjab University and later at the National College of Arts, 'to look at, study and see' the subject matter. He never forsook realism and prophetically demonstrated that fidelity to the object can be as modern as abstract art.'¹³

Akbar Naqvi describes a rural



42. *LANDSCAPE* (1990s), oil on board, 52 cm x 38 cm

Personal Collection



43. *LANDSCAPE (late 1990s), oil on board*

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Dr. Ahmed Hasan

landscape by Khalid Iqbal in another way.

'The stillness of the village scene, accented by the cooing of doves and the mourning sound of a modest milling machine which accentuates the silence of the tune, is nature's hour of siesta, a habit acquired from long association with human kind. Geometry, represented by the horizontal bars of the painting's

composition and truth to nature in the way trees, buffaloes and the grass and water have been painted are equally pronounced here. Just as it is important to savour the timelessness of the design. In due course, Khalid Iqbal used both the Renaissance design and Cezanne's way of chromatic structuring from painting to painting. The absence of man woman and child from his paintings



44. *LANDSCAPE* (1990s), oil on board, 66 cm x 50 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Yawar Ali

highlighted rural habitation in the lap of nature. It is the profile of the peasant, which we see in the painting without his presence. Even in the wilderness, where the Keekar grow, the irrigation channels mark the presence of man labouring on

land.¹⁴

But Khalid's main theme is not the village. He has made a habit of visiting the fringes of Lahore which have not become a part of the urban landscape. The rugged fallow land, furrowed and



45. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 55 cm x 82 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal



46. LANDSCAPE (2000), oil on board, 47 cm x 62 cm

Collection Mustansar Hussain Tarar

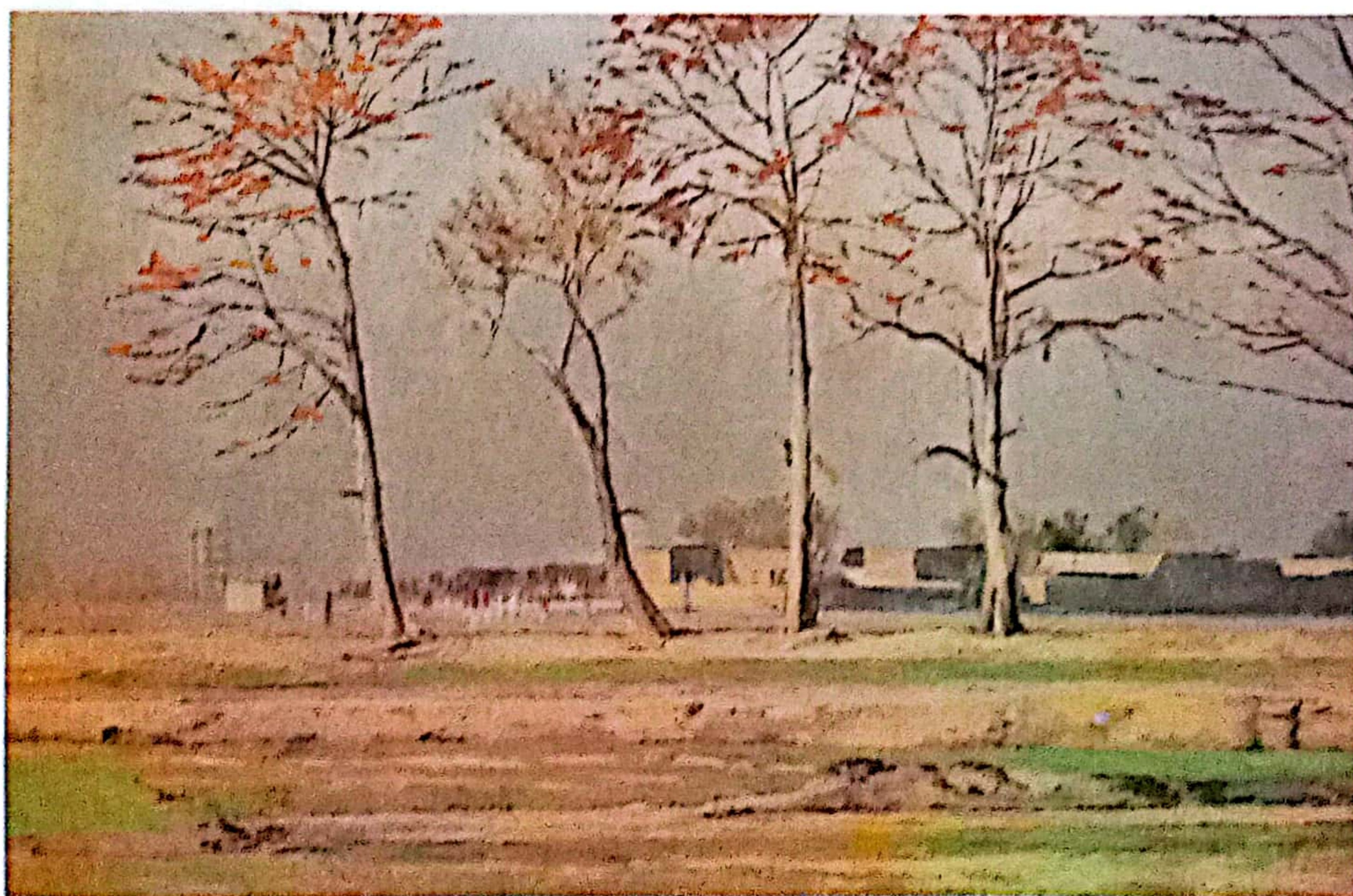


47. *LANDSCAPE* (1990s), oil on board

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Tariq Saigol

potted, with clumps of dry hardy grass, sometimes endowed with stagnant standing water with its moss-grown surface sometimes enriched with clusters

of reeds, and an occasional tree holding the landscape together. On several occasions, he has made flowering trees, sometimes with charming success, but



48. *LANDSCAPE* (1990s), oil on board



49. *LANDSCAPE* (1990s), oil on board, 60 cm x 45.5 cm

Collection Mrs. & Dr. Zafar Aziz



50. *LANDSCAPE* (1990s), oil on board, 51 cm x 44 cm

Collection Mustansar Hussain Tarar

the hallmark of his major work has to be his amazing ability to capture the desolate, rugged terrain that surrounds so many of the small towns of the Punjab.

He cherishes his still-lives a great deal. These, again, are based on ordinary subjects like broken glass, a flower in a glass in the unlikely company of onions, potted plants. It is his drawing and his eye for perfect rendering of colour tones that transforms these ordinary objects into works of art.

When asked about the dating of his

pictures, Khalid replies with his ever-ready sense of humour. 'I don't remember the dates' he says, 'but you can always tell by the size. I painted relatively large pictures when I travelled by car and smaller ones after I switched on to a motor cycle'. The only way to know the timing of his painting is that the brilliant light in his earlier paintings and colour in his shadows far surpasses anything he did later. We can see in his later paintings, a perceptible partiality to misty locations, early morning scenes with shrouds of haze enveloping distant



51. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 59 cm x 45 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Najam Sethi

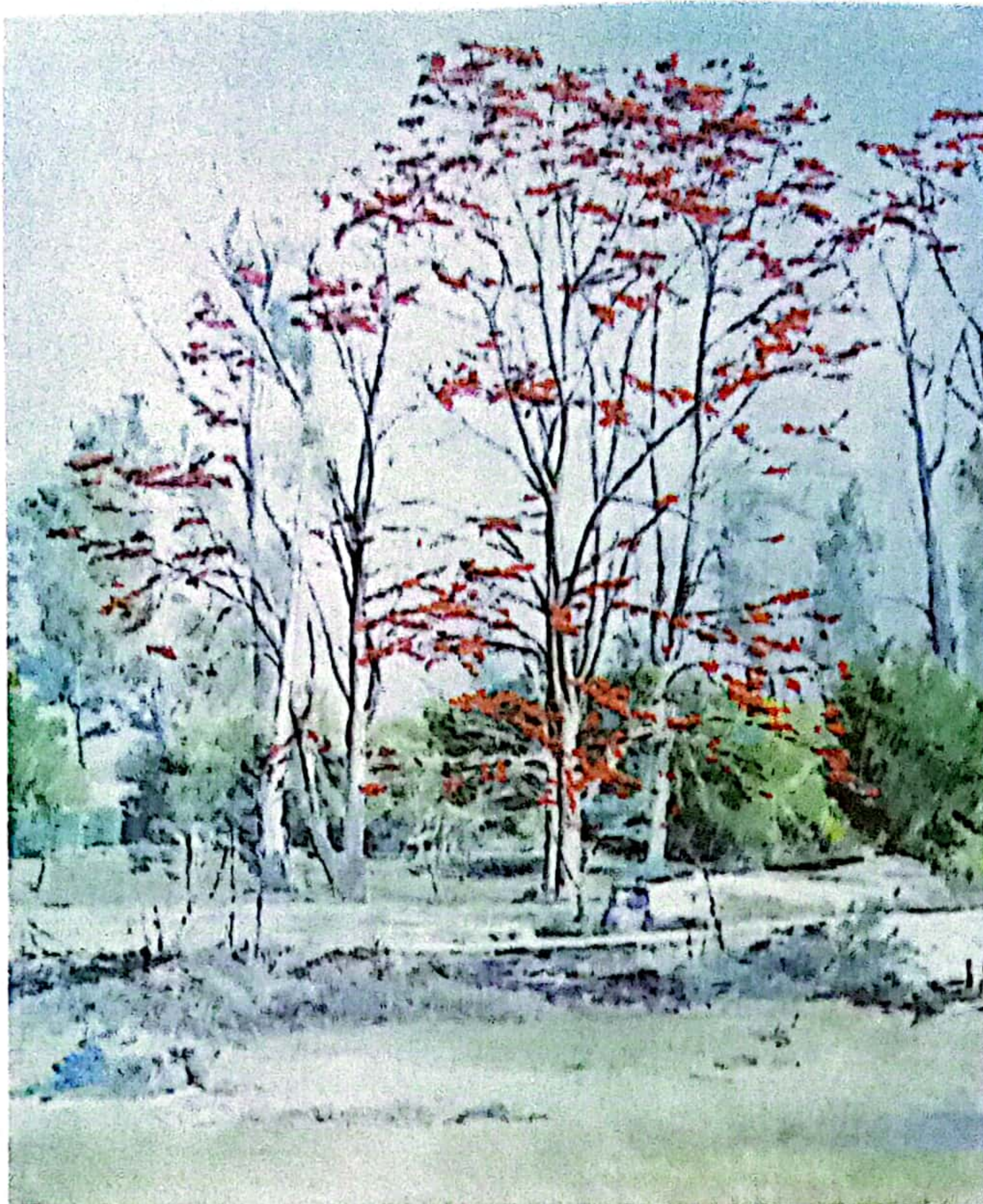


52. LANDSCAPE (early 1990s), oil on board

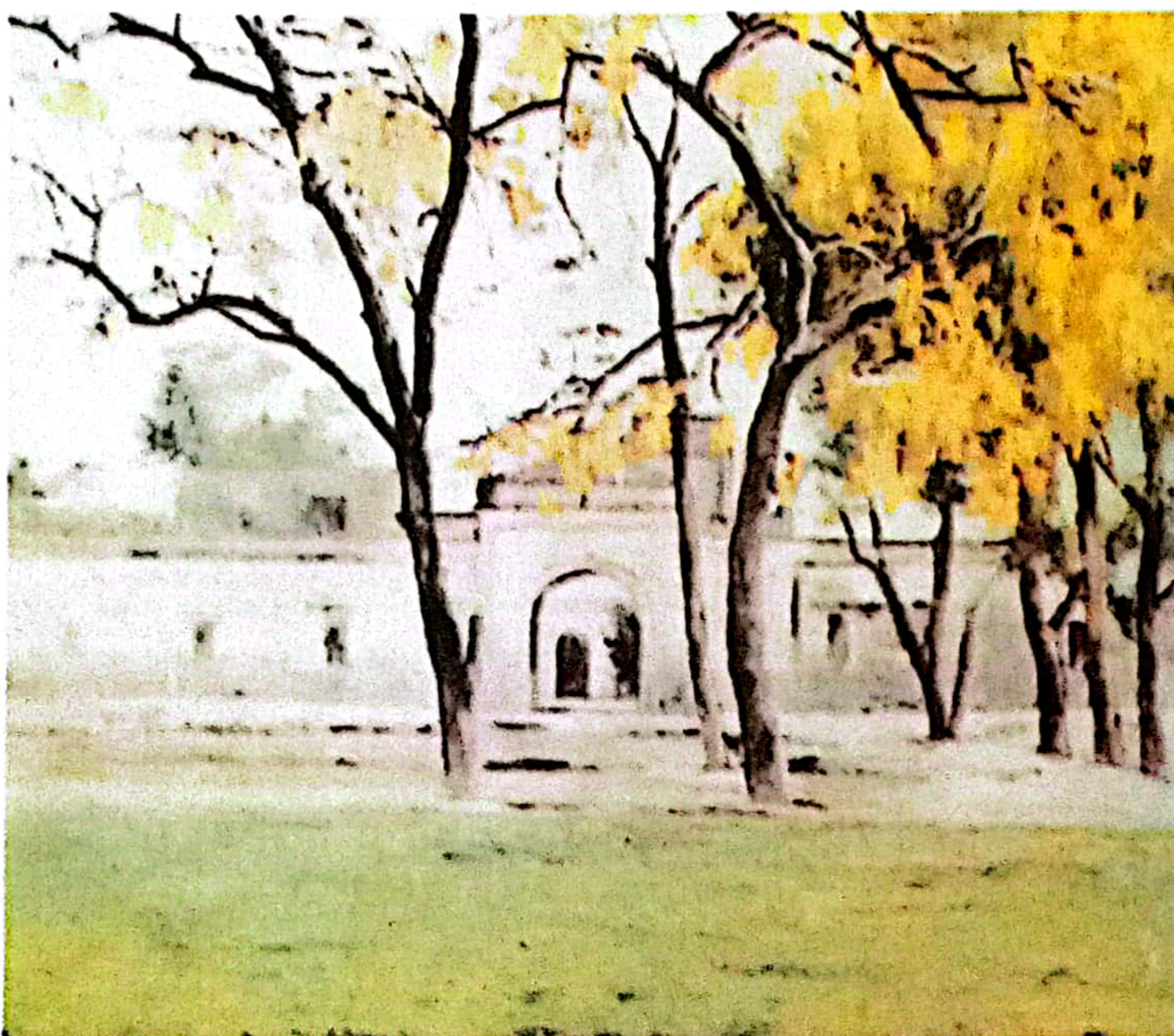


53. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 55 cm x 75 cm

Collection Tamkanat Shahid



54. LANDSCAPE INDIAN CORAL (1990's), oil on board, 65.5 cm x 73 cm
Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shehla Saigol



55. LANDSCAPE WITH LABURNUMS (1990's), oil on board, 65.5 cm x 73 cm
Collection Mustansar Hussain Tarar

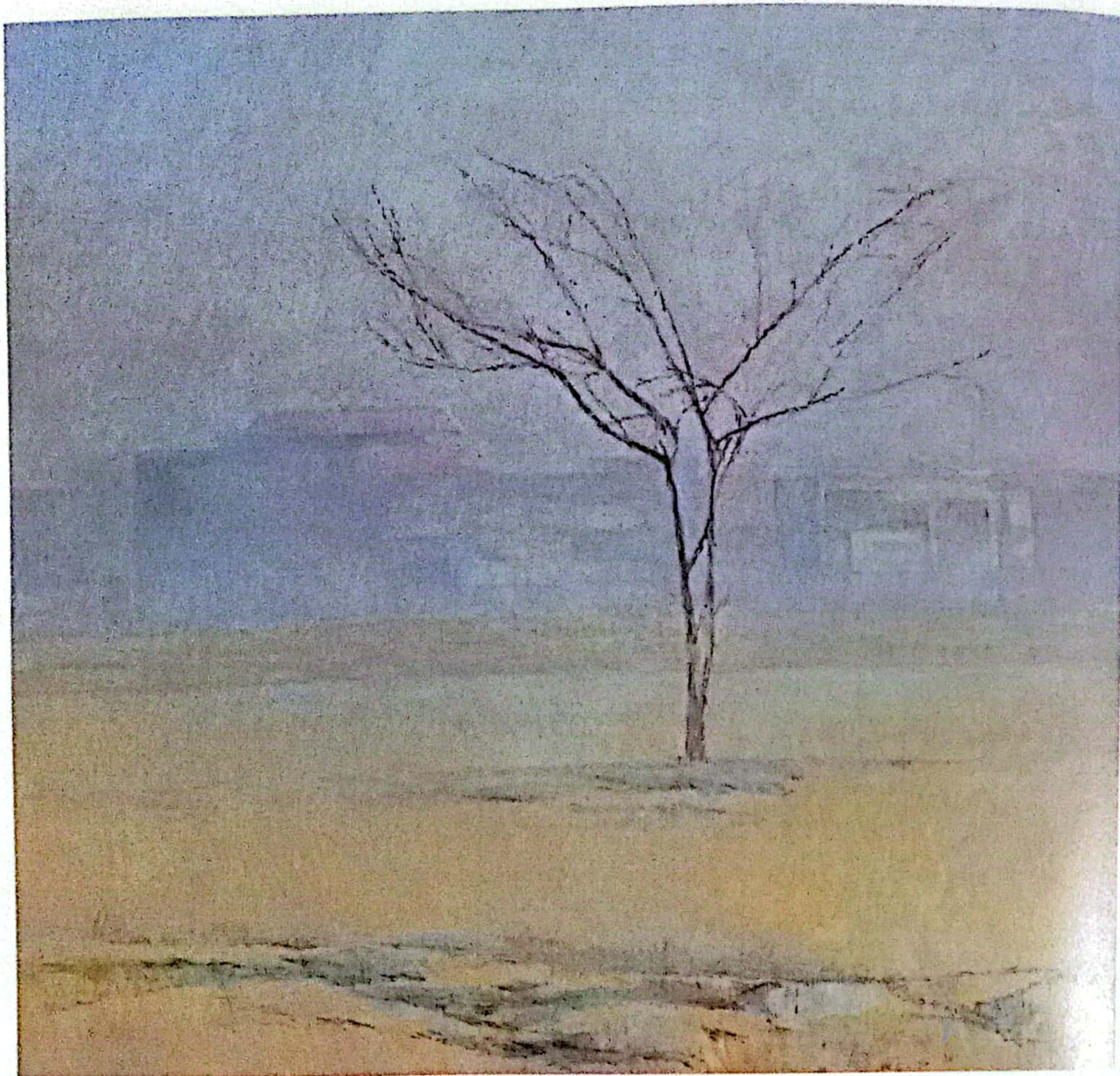


56. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board



57. LANDSCAPE (2001), oil on board, 54 cm x 70 cm

Personal Collection



58. *LANDSCAPE, EARLY MORNING MIST*, 2001 (1990s), 61.5 cm x 68 cm

Collection Dr. Munawar Al

foliage and imparting the chill that created a rarefied atmosphere. It is understandable then that the colours are muted and sharp shadows mingle with the mist to create a mystery and an uncertainty. This may be the result of weakening eyesight or a philosophical

outlook that refuses to see life in the contrast of just black and white.

Khalid's views about abstract art have not changed over the years. He is a great admirer of many abstract paintings but he insists that modern artists have taken to abstraction not out of any intellectual

compulsion but because of a lack of ability to paint in any other way. He feels that a great deal of modern art needs to rely on words in order to communicate with the audience. It all boils down to a lot of talk and words, in which the visual and aesthetic aspect takes the back seat.

The need to start from the reality that is present all around you has always been emphasized by artists of all modes of painting. How each painter interprets that reality is what differentiates him or her from the other artists. Even Picasso expressed a similar sentiment when he said,

'There is no abstract art. You must always start with something. Afterwards you can remove all traces of reality. There is no danger then anyway because the idea of the object will have left an indelible mark.'¹⁵

Khalid Iqbal has always preferred a retired style of living and has invariably allowed people who care for him and respect him to seek his company on the premises of his own house. This sentiment is shared by many artists. Cezanne in one of his letters, writes

'All my life I have worked to be able to earn my living, but I thought that one



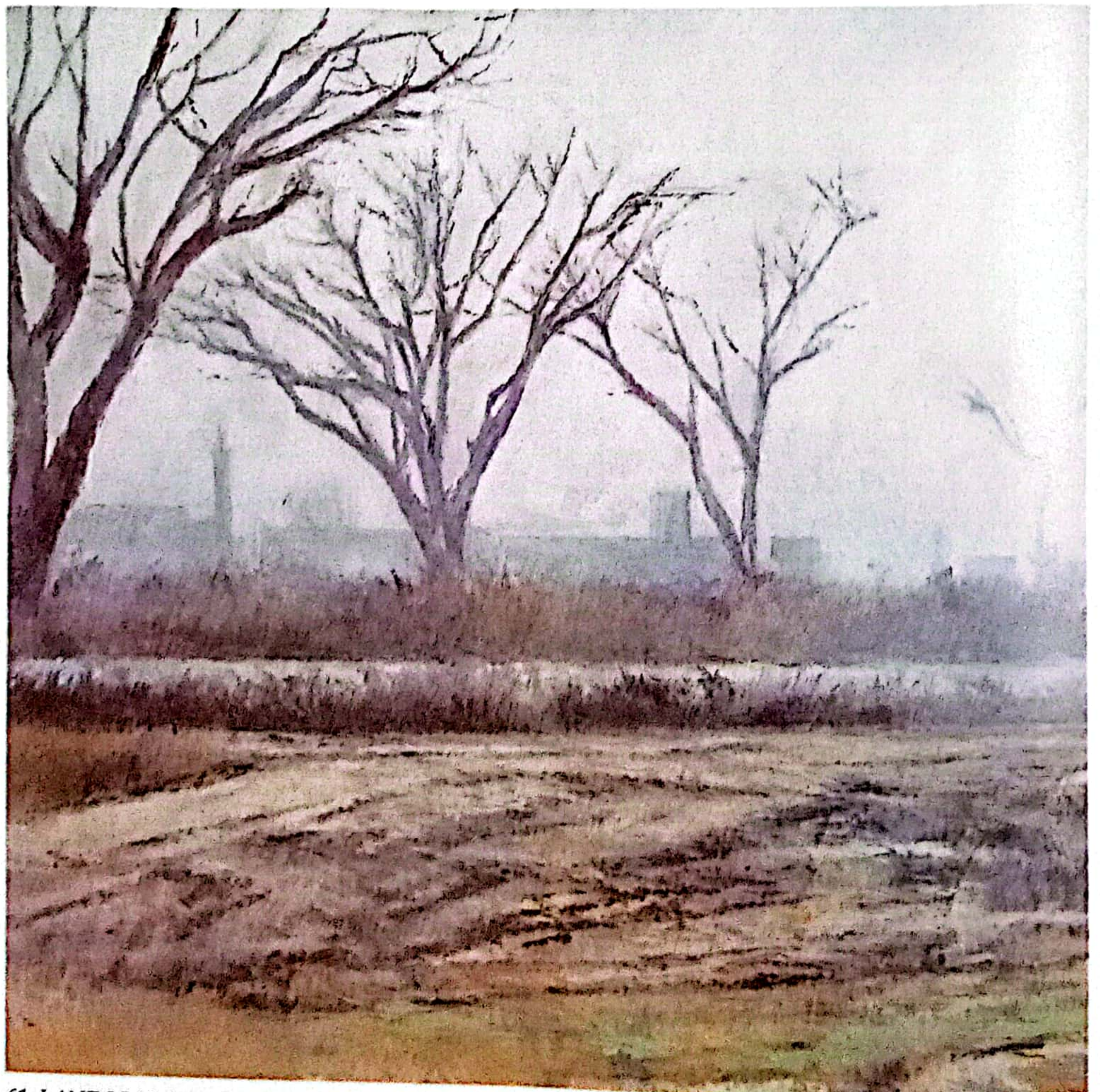
59. *LANDSCAPE* (2002), oil on board, 54 cm x 68 cm

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Najam Sethi



60. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 63.5 cm x 25.5 cm

Collection General Rafi



61. LANDSCAPE (2000), oil on board, 62 cm x 69 cm

Collection Lahore Art Gallery

could do good painting without attracting attention to one's private life. To be sure an artist wishes to raise his standard intellectually as much as possible, but the man must remain in obscurity. Pleasure must be found in study.'¹⁶

His students from as far afield as Karachi and Quetta go to pay their homage to him whenever they are in Lahore. His friend Mohammad Safdar helped him and his mother build the house and even today he is grateful to his departed friend for something that he feels he could never have done for himself. When questioned as to why

people had such respect for him he said that he had never tried to put anyone down. He made a point of encouraging anyone who sought his opinion and support.

He rarely participated in any group activity. One association he very staunchly supported, until his recent bad health did not allow his participation in its various activities, is the Artists Association of the Punjab. He was one of the very active founder members. Miss Nasim Hafiz Qazi was the first President. This Association was formed eighteen years ago and was launched with the idea of providing a platform for



62. LANDSCAPE (2001), oil on board

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Tariq Saigol



63. LANDSCAPE (2001), oil on board

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Tariq Saigol

expression to artists young and old. It has been successfully holding art exhibitions and Seminars on art in Lahore for the past seventeen years and has opened its doors to artists and art critics from all other provinces to come and display their work in the exhibitions and also interact with the artists of Lahore.

Recently Khalid went through a bad time, when his health problems dominated his other concerns. He felt weak and frail and was not able to venture out for his usual landscape painting trips. Any one with less commitment to painting would have stayed at home and rested. Khalid just

changed gear and went into a new groove. He produced a series of gem like still lives that are delicate and subtle and such joy to behold.

Among the few people that Khalid visited are two who were his close friends. Shakir Ali was a friend and colleague who had been associated with Khalid since his days at the Punjab University. Shakir valued Khalid's opinion about his work and was perceptive enough to remark.

'When Khalid enters the room, I can tell whether he likes my painting or not'. This association must have been strengthened greatly during the time he was working at the National College.

When Shakir Ali retired from the College, he was a broken and a shattered man. Rightly or wrongly he felt that the very people whom he had nurtured and promoted had betrayed him. When he was the Principal, these people had taken full advantage of his friendship and his very generous hospitality. They failed to support him when he needed their support and had in fact actively campaigned against him to remove him

from his post of Principal. That was a time Shakir Ali would sit every evening, all alone in his house which might have been a masterpiece of design and innovation but was dark and depressing as the abode of a very disheartened painter. Every evening he would sit and brood in that dark house with no one to keep him company except his cousin who kept house for him.

The only people who ever visited him



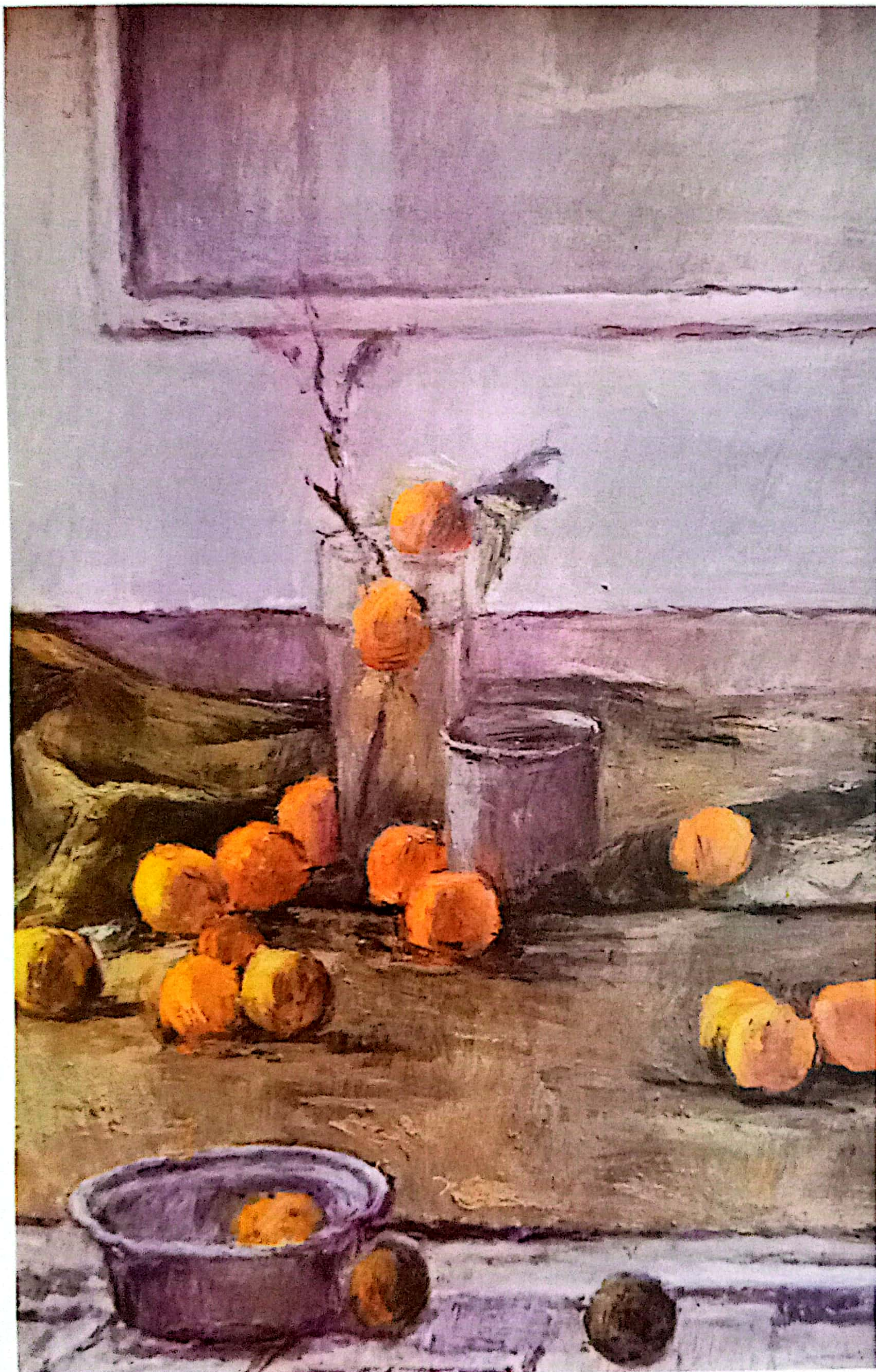
64. *LANDSCAPE WITH WATER HYACINTHS* (1990s), oil on board, 44 cm x 44 cm

Collection Mrs. Kramet

were Khalid Iqbal and Ijaz ul Hassan and sometimes Dr Ijaz Anwar. Khalid of course was much more regular. He visited Shakir every evening until the time of his death. They would sit there each day surrounded by beautifully crafted artefacts, made under Shakir's personal supervision, and talk about the times gone by. Shakir talked about the people who had betrayed him and Khalid was always a good listener. Shakir had lost the will to paint and there was nothing that anybody could do to talk him out of his depression. Taufiq Rafat was a friend from Khalid's school days in Dhera Dun and when he was alive, he was the person Khalid visited every day. They had so much in common. Their love for cricket was one consuming interest that led them to the stadium to watch whenever a test match or a one-day match was being played between the Pakistan team and any visiting team. They sat in the general enclosure and always had a wealth of anecdotes to relate about the comments

made by people or the behaviour of the crowd. Khalid's great sense of humour enabled him to find enjoyment in the most ordinary remarks. Taufiq was a great admirer of Khalid's painting and Khalid was equally appreciative of Taufiq's poetry. The mutual respect and admiration allowed them to interact most amicably for many years. When Taufiq died Khalid must have missed him. The serenity of Khalid's life and in fact his landscape has never been disturbed by the traumas that have shaken his immediate surroundings. He has continued his steady pursuit of the real, unfettered and unruffled by any tinge of emotion or sentiment.

For Khalid's work Cezanne's words hold greater truth than any other, 'A minute in the world's life passes! To paint it in its reality, and forget everything for that! To become that minute, to be the sensitive plate... give the image of what we see, forgetting everything that has appeared before our time.'¹⁷



65. STILL LIFE (2003), oil on board

Collection Mr. & Mrs. Najam Sethi

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

No.	Page
1. LANDSCAPE (1954), oil on board, 65 cm x 52.5 cm Personal Collection	17
2. PORTRAIT OF ANNA MALKA AHMAD (early 1960s), oil on board, 180 cm x 120 cm	18
3. LANDSCAPE (1960s), oil on board, 39 cm x 58.5 cm, Collection General Rafi, Islamabad	19
4. LANDSCAPE (1960s), oil on board, 61.5 cm x 49.5 cm, Collection General Rafi	20
5. PORTRAIT OF COLIN DAVID (1960s), oil on board	21
6. LANDSCAPE (1960s), oil on board, 40.5 cm x 74 cm, Collection General Rafi	22
7. PORTRAIT OF MISBAH UDDIN QAZI (late 1960s), 34 cm x 32 cm	23
8. STILL LIFE (1970s), oil on board, 62 cm x 34 cm, Personal Collection	24
9. LANDSCAPE (1970s), oil on board, 58 cm x 30 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Yawar Ali	24
10. PORTRAIT (1970s), oil on board, 43 cm x 31.5 cm, Personal Collection	25
11. PORTRAIT OF MURTAZA BASHIR, the East Pakistani artist who came to live in Lahore, (early 1960s) oil on board, 180 cm x 120 cm	27
12. LANDSCAPE (1970s), oil on board, 57 cm x 74 cm, Collection Hayat Furnitures	28
13. CLOTHESLINE LANDSCAPE (1976), oil on board, 64 cm x 89 cm, Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmad	30
14. SELF PORTRAIT (1970s), oil on board, 43 cm x 30 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal	31
15. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 60 cm x 75 cm, Mustansar Hussain Tarar	33
16. LANDSCAPE OF KOTHA PIND (1978), oil on board, 39.5 cm x 56 cm, Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmad	33
17. LANDSCAPE (1981), oil on board, 34 cm x 60 cm, Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmad	34
18. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board	35
19. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 72 cm x 56 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Yawar Ali	36

No.	Page
20. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 74 cm x 62 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal	37
21. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 44 cm x 62 cm, Personal Collection	37
22. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 68 cm x 63 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal	38
23. PORTRAIT (1970s), oil on board, Collection Shehla Saigol	39
24. LANDSCAPE (1984), oil on board, 51 cm x 25 cm, Personal Collection	40
25. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 52 cm x 45 cm, Collection Tamkanet Shahid	41
26. LANDSCAPE OF SAMSANE VILLAGE (1982), oil on board, 35 cm x 57 cm, Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmad	42
27. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 62 cm x 53 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal	42
28. PORTRAIT (1980s), oil on board, 35 cm x 27 cm, Personal Collection	43
29. PORTRAIT (1980s), oil on board, 30 cm x 39.5 cm, Personal Collection	44
30. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 59 cm x 54 cm, Collection Mustansar Hussain Tarar	44
31. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 61 cm x 44 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Yawar Ali	45
32. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 47.5 cm x 62.5 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Yawar Ali	46
33. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 69 cm x 62 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal	47
34. ABANDONED BRICK KILN (Oct. 1992), oil on board, 71 cm x 59 cm, Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmad	48
35. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 64 cm x 53 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal	48
36. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 63 cm x 70.2 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Mansha	49
37. BULLRUSHES (1990s), oil on board, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Tariq Saigol	49

No.	Page	No.	Page
38. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 54 cm x 69 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Najam Sethi	50	52. LANDSCAPE (early 1990s), oil on board	61
39. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 45 cm x 55 cm, Collection Mrs. Kramet	51	53. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 55 cm x 75 cm, Collection Tamkanet Shahid	61
40. LANDSCAPE (1980s), oil on board, 49 cm x 60 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Dr. Zafar Aziz	51	54. LANDSCAPE INDIAN CORAL (1990's), oil on board, 65.5 cm x 73 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shehla Saigol	62
41. LANDSCAPE (late 1990s), oil on board, Collection Yousaf Kamal	52	55. LANDSCAPE WITH LABURNUMS (1990's), oil on board, 65.5 cm x 73 cm, Collection Mustansar Hussain Tarar	62
42. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 52 cm x 38 cm, Personal Collection	53	56. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board	63
43. LANDSCAPE (late 1990s), oil on board, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Dr. Ahmed Hasan	54	57. LANDSCAPE (2001), oil on board, 54 cm x 70 cm, Personal Collection	63
44. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 66 cm x 50 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Yawar Ali	55	58. LANDSCAPE, EARLY MORNING MIST, 2001 (1990s), 61.5 cm x 68 cm, Collection Dr. Munawar Ahmed	64
45. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 55 cm x 82 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Shahid Jalal	56	59. LANDSCAPE (2002), oil on board, 54 cm x 68 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Najam Sethi	65
46. LANDSCAPE (2000), oil on board, 47 cm x 62 cm, Collection Mustansar Hussain Tarar	56	60. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 63.5 cm x 25.5 cm, Collection General Rafi	66
47. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Tariq Saigol	57	61. LANDSCAPE (2000), oil on board, 62 cm x 69 cm, Collection Lahore Art Gallery	66
48. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board	57	62. LANDSCAPE (2001), oil on board, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Tariq Saigol	67
49. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 60 cm x 45.5 cm, Collection Mrs. & Dr. Zafar Aziz	58	63. LANDSCAPE (2001), oil on board, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Tariq Saigol	68
50. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 51 cm x 44 cm, Collection Mustansar Hussain Tarar	59	64. LANDSCAPE WITH WATER HYACINTHS (1990s), oil on board, 44 cm x 44 cm, Collection Mrs. Kramet	69
51. LANDSCAPE (1990s), oil on board, 59 cm x 45 cm, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Najam Sethi	60	65. STILL LIFE (2003), oil on board, Collection Mr. & Mrs. Najam Sethi	71

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Khalid Iqbal	4
2. Khalid Iqbal	9
3. Khalid Iqbal teaching at the Punjab University Fine Arts Department in the early 1960s	22
4. Professor Khalid Iqbal conducting Empress Farah Diba of Iran at an Exhibition of paintings in the National College	32





Dr. Musarrat Hasan is an art historian, a teacher with a vast experience and a painter of distinction. She obtained her Master's degree from the University of Punjab in 1961, and completed her Ph.D. in art history in 1996. Currently, she is Professor of Ph.D. Studies at the Institute of Art and Design, University of the Punjab, and Supervising Professor for doctoral thesis in Fine Arts, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore.

Her publications include:

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