

PAINTINGS
FROM PAKISTAN

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Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan
Pakistan National Commission
for UNESCO

PAINTINGS FROM PAKISTAN

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Prelude

CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE

In recent years, a number of artists have made their mark in no uncertain way on the contemporary art scene in Pakistan. Some of them are highly gifted and have charted new paths in the world of art. In spite of this, it is generally felt that artists in Pakistan have not received the recognition which their contemporaries outside Pakistan have enjoyed. One of the reasons for this lack of recognition is that they did not get adequate exposure. Some time ago, Mr. Saeed Ahmad Qureshi, the then Education Secretary, Government of Pakistan, had come up with the idea of bringing out a book on the modern Pakistani artists. The present volume is the direct result of that idea. What was dream, has now taken tangible shape. I hope that this book will be followed by other publications on the same subject by the Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan.

Asif Rahim
Secretary,
Ministry of
Culture & Tourism
Government of Pakistan
May '88

ART HERITAGE

Pakistan has rich artistic heritage dating back to 5000 years. The modern times reflect a continuation of this heritage and a quest for a new metaphor and endeavours to relate it to the contemporary scene. The younger generation of the artists has been particularly successful in achieving a synthesis of the traditional and modern art and in filling up a vacuum that appeared in our artistic tradition after the fall of the Moghal empire. From Chughtai to the avant-garde artists, there is in evidence a zest to give to art the status and prestige that it once enjoyed in precolonial era. The present-day artists are influencing the society in subtle and shocking ways to sensitise it to the current events. Through the idiom of lines, colours and textures, they are providing a new interpretation of their environment and enriching the perception of others.

While a lot has been written on the Pakistani artists and art in the newspapers and magazines, there is no single book having articles on the Pakistani artists. It is gratifying that at long last the idea of publishing a book on the Pakistani artists has been transformed into reality as a joint enterprise of the Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO and the Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan. The valuable contribution by Mrs. Anjum Riyazul Haque and Dr. Khalid Said Butt for completion of the project is indeed laudable. I hope that the book would prove a source of inspiration for the art lovers in Pakistan and abroad.

Saeed Ahmed Qureshi
September '87

Acknowledgement

A REPRESENTATIVE COLLECTION FROM PAKISTAN

The development of art is the hallmark of every nation. Not only has it nurtured talent within, but has also served as a reflecting mirror for the outside world. Pakistan too, harbours one of the richest treasures of relics reminiscent of both the old and new civilizations and traditions. The country stands at the cross roads of variegated influences, encompassing the Indus valley, the Gandhara, the Greek, Persian and Central Asian civilizations. These historical and traditional influences have found expression in the work of our artists, who have been influenced alike by modern developments in art, local customs and traditions, branching out into various schools of expression.

The canvas and colour have provided one format of expression and artists have developed it institutionally and individually to advance national traditions, be it through the miniatures of Chughtai or the calligraphy of Sadequain.

It was felt that despite possessing such a wide array of expression, no effort had heretofore been made to publish a collection of works that would introduce our artists and their work in both national and international forums.

PAINTINGS FROM PAKISTAN is presented here as a representative collection of modern art in Pakistan. The thirteen painters included in the book belong to various schools. The idea emanated from Mr. Saeed Ahmad Qureshi, the former Secretary of Education, Government of Pakistan, for which we express our gratitude. We are also grateful to Dr. Khalid Said Butt, Director General, Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan for his cooperation in the accomplishment of this joint venture between the Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO and the Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan. Paintings from Pakistan, it is hoped will be a useful source of intellectual expression and aesthetic stimulation.

Mrs. Anjum Riyazul Haque
Secretary General
Pakistan National Commission
for UNESCO

A MODEST BEGINNING

The publication of this book has had a pretty chequered history. The idea first germinated in the mind of the then Secretary Education, Mr. Saeed Ahmed Qureshi. It was pursued by the ever-energetic, enthusiastic and aggressive Secretary General of the Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO. UNESCO provided the requisite funds and the project was handed over to the Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan for implementation. From the initial embryonic stage to the actual publication, it was a long journey. The selection of the artists was the first task. Once the selection was finalised, it was a delicate job to choose art critics for critical appreciation. Keeping into consideration the need for individualistic and fresh approach to the artists, we opted for the most difficult solution. It was decided to assign separate art critic for write-up on each individual artist. Equally delicate was the task of choosing works of each artist. Here again, we are grateful to Mr. Saeed Ahmed Qureshi for his patience and guidance.

The most difficult decision was about the actual printing of the book. One proposal was to get the entire book printed from Hong Kong or Singapore. Steps were initiated, contacts made and arrangements finalized. Somehow or the other, there was some hesitation on our part against involving foreign printers in the venture. We were still toying with this idea when an old colleague of ours came to our rescue. Mr. Mustansar Javed worked with the Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan for over five years. During his tenure with the Idara, he was instrumental in bringing out some of the finest publications including the quarterly magazine "SAQAFAT". Mr. Mustansar Javed agreed to supervise the job personally in case the book was to be printed in Pakistan. Naturally we would not let such an opportunity slip out of our hands. We followed his advice and the results are before you. At least, we can be proud of the fact that this book is an exclusively Pakistani effort.

This is only a beginning. The publication of "Paintings from Pakistan" has given us courage and determination to publish more prestigious books on the arts of Pakistan. And we are confident that the distinguished patrons like Mr. Saeed Ahmad Qureshi, Mr. Asif Rahim and Mrs. Anjum Riyazul Haque would always be there to help us in our endeavours both morally and financially.

Dr. Khalid Said Butt
Director General
Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan

PAKISTANI PAINTING SINCE THE FIFTIES

In the Fifties, Pakistani painting took a great leap forward from the orientalism of Chughtai to the modernism of Shakir Ali. Chughtai's art is the apotheosis of the great sub-continental miniature tradition, accommodating itself to the European technique of drawing, and the ways of the Far Eastern colour wash. He dreamed of Muslim glory in facial, sartorial and architectural symbols of medieval Islamic culture. Chughtai's art belongs, correctly, to the days of our struggle for a Muslim homeland in the sub-continent. This is why when his younger contemporaries began looking for national identity after independence, they left Chughtai alone with his dreams and set forth to take their place in the international world of art.

Ustad Allah Bukhsh and Haji Sharif also flourished in the same post-Independence milieu as Chughtai. The Ustad painted in oil with great dexterity and, often did scenes from Hindu mythology, village folklore and the Punjab's land. Haji Sharif remained a traditional miniature painter, celebrating the contribution of his own family, in the fine rendition of the Kangra image and style. They cultivated dead-ends, a hiatus rather than possibilities of new openings.

NEW TRENDS

When Shakir Ali appeared on the Pakistani scene in the Fifties, after a long apprenticeship in Paris, Chughtai had done his great work. He had no lead to give to the painters of Pakistan. Shakir Ali had been trained in Cubism by Andre L'Hote. Even though belated, he was ready to introduce Cubism into Pakistan. His role in promoting modernism was profounder though not earlier, chronologically, than that of Zubeida Agha. While Shakir Ali demonstrated to his friends the logical rigours of Cubism, revealing to them the exciting painterly possibilities of the canvas surface, Zubeida Agha was also instrumental in bringing home to Pakistan the designs and idiomatic promises of modernism from New York.

It would be a mistake to conclude from this that these painters were mindlessly derivative. On the contrary, their works were examples of a

Introduction

search after expression which would be deeply felt and personal. These painters were much pre-occupied with authenticity, with the true voice of feeling, and found that they could work freely, testing their strength at the same time, in a language and philosophy of art commonly shared the world over.

UPSURGE

Shakir Ali was a catalyst, and a large number of painters appeared on the national scene as the first of the moderns. All of them painted as if a wonderful discovery had been made, believing that the history of painting began with Cezanne and the Parisian painters of the early decades of the present century. Ali Imam, essentially a figurative painter, did self-portraits and other public and anonymous characters as if the only depth a painter required were the flat surface of the canvas. Strictly two-dimensional, he made his figures appear and vanish, using paint to veil and unveil them with textural richness. Shemza seized upon the use of calligraphy by Paul Klee; and basing himself on his understanding of this painter, made his fine painterly statements.

Ahmed Pervez once said that Shakir Ali gave him his freedom so that he could paint as he liked. A compulsive bohemian, he recreated in his works the experience of release and irrepressibility. Ahmed Pervez was essentially a painter of the refuse. He painted bits and pieces as well as worm-like elements and transformed them into chromatic incandescences of heat and light. At his best, his appeal was visceral. Close to his death, he became interested in birds and domesticity, as outrageously contradictory as ever, and painted chairs, the walls of his living room and feathered movements, all as volubly colourful as ever.

These painters were engaged in articulating their own authenticity in a language derived from the break-up of the European art tradition in the early decades of the 20th century. Emphasis was on innovation, and even though late, what could be more so than the works of Shakir Ali and Zubeida Agha, when you put them against Chughtai and Ustad Allah Bukhsh. Capable of expressing thought and deep feeling, they left the world of nature alone and occupied themselves with modes of expression and a personal appropriation of the outside world.

LANDSCAPE

Meanwhile, another painter of Pakistan, Khalid Iqbal, was doing villages. He was painting the Punjab rural scene with deft impressionistic touches of light and poetry of light. He used spatial depth conventionally to give his village houses their typically cubistic dimensions. In his paintings, light poured from the sky not to dissolve objects but to give them the grace of love.

But Khalid Iqbal was alone in choosing this direction. Other painters found the theme of traditional Arabic calligraphy far more attractive when they felt the need to take modernism into traditional directions. When Shakir Ali moved from Braque to Matisse, he found that calligraphy gave him

further painterly possibilities than the figures of the nude, the bull, birds and flowers. Using Arabic calligraphy as structural grid, he painted some of the most enchanting works done in Pakistan. Before his death, Shakir Ali had emptied his canvas of all elements except a unitary image of a flower, a vase and even a large coloured disk, painting in off-white laid over cross-hatched greens and reds, playing hide and seek from behind the surface. He had just started to paint the poetry and anguish of space when he passed away.

Shakir Ali and his friends formed a group and were not a movement. Gulgee did not belong to this group, and arrived at his achievements under the influence of action painting. Gulgee is profligate with his own talent, and works in several styles and crafts at the same time. He has painted polo matches, drawn events and public personalities with a journalistic dash, made sculptural totems of avant gardism, crafted mosaic portraits in lapis lazuli of the late Aga Khan and King Faisal. He has also painted some of the most illumined calligraphic paintings.

ENERGISED CHOREOGRAPHY

Gulgee renders movements of sticker tapes floating through the air, or, the flight of a meteor as gesture. The impression created is of an energized choreography waltzing through space. With these movements, he often combines impasted blocks of paint, ornamented with small pieces of mirrors, as the women of the Sind desert do with their colourful dresses, as if they are abstract images of stellar bodies held gravitationally in depth. Gulgee is a painter of the firmament who finds the painting of Arabic calligraphy as natural as laying out movement patterns in the void. He could say with justice that all these and other movements are but the ayats of God, and this is why he finds that his training in action painting has given him the necessary strength to paint calligraphy.

For the world at large Sadequain and calligraphy have become synonymous. But he took his start from Picasso and his drawing of pre-historic Greek myths. He drew and painted large females of elephantine proportions who, in his later works, lost their height and tumescence to look more and more like his own self of skin and bones. At this stage, Sadequain also discovered the Sind desert cacti which came to look more and more like him in his works. The colour of sand and the alluvial soil, the red of the setting sun, the darkness of night and the blue of the heaven came to occupy his thought so much that he used them again and again to create his own characteristically purgatorial palette.

REVIVAL OF CALLIGRAPHY

Sadequain, who is also a poet of some merit, emerged from this phase to discover that one of the greatest Urdu poets, Ghalib, had to offer him a lot. He illustrated Ghalib's verse as Chughtai had done in the Twenties and won the immortality which is his. Sadequain's work was very different from Chughtai's romance extravaganza. Instead of the spirit and fragrance of the ghazal, Sadequain chose the poet's marked pre-occupation with suffering. From his interest in the blood and gore of ghazal, Sadequain

came to rest in calligraphy. He wanted to move from the vistas of pain into a haven of painlessness. He came to calligraphy not as a traditionalist, but as a modernist, in the sense that he produced calligraphic works which are rules in themselves. Sadequain has revived calligraphy by playing the cavalier with its established rules and tradition. He has brought to this art a attitude which is individualistic, experimental and innovative.

No account of Sadequain will be complete without a few words on his murals, which can be seen at public places all over Pakistan and also in Dubai. He works within gargantuan dimensions and had the ambition which could prompt him to fill the whole world with a single uninterrupted mural on the theme of man and his universe. The works which have been executed by him so far, are monumentally heroic. They possess great appeal, their rhetoric is obvious and well-meaning.

ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

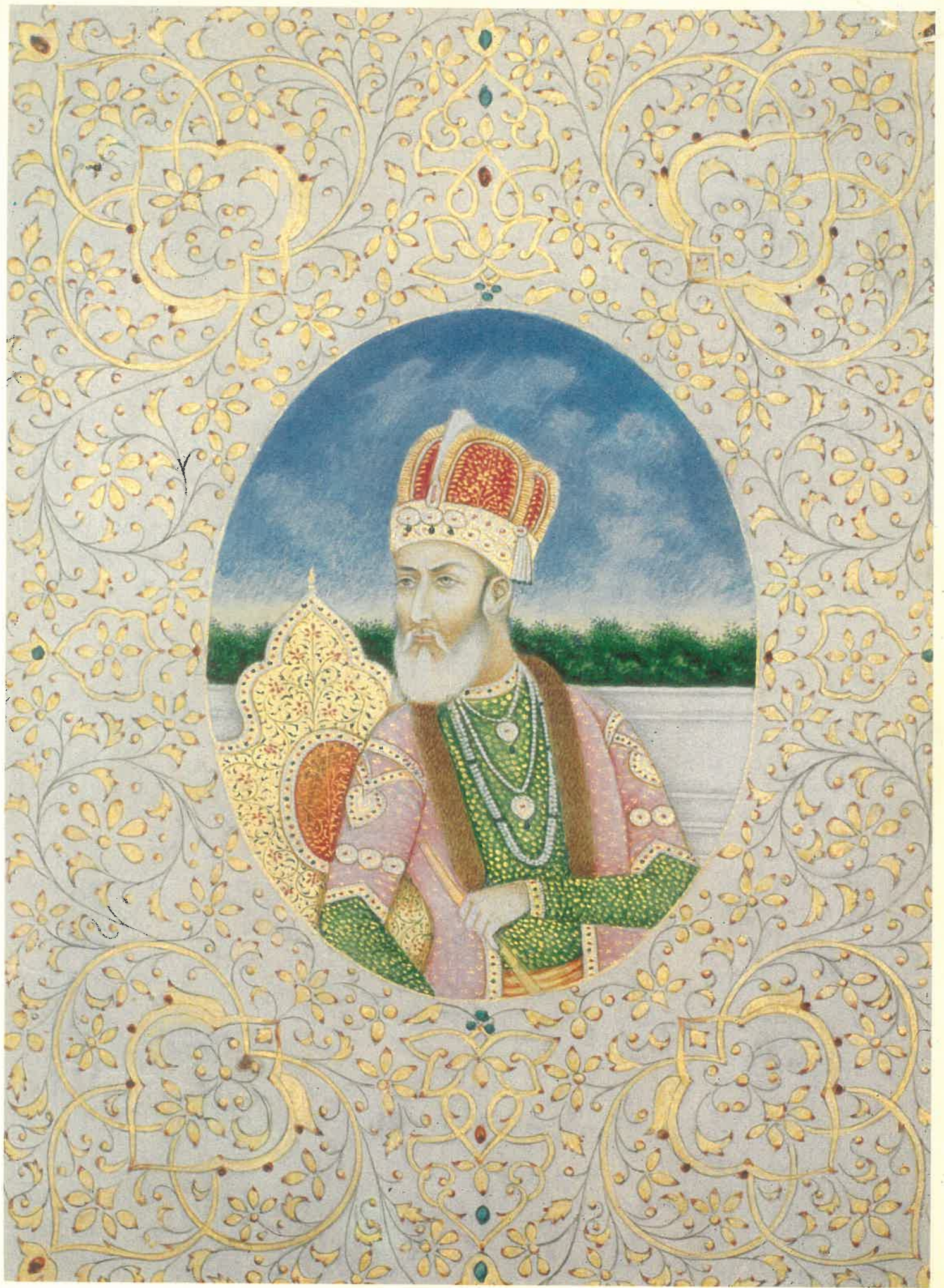
Painters who achieved recognition and fame in the Sixties, remained true to the handling of the canvas as an abstract, geometric surface rather than a window opening into nature and history. They used bold abstract lines to articulate figures, and chose native colours and designs for their work. It appears as if the language and syntax of modern occidental art suited their painterly and cultural needs better. Zahoorul Akhlaque, always a formalist, has used abstract expressionism and minimalism which can be recognized as typically of the soil. Jamil Naqsh who paints nudes, uses them to warm his beautifully worked pigmented surfaces rather than expose their bodies alone. Mansur Rahi after graduating from Picasso, has come to rest in a style indisputably his own. His paintings consist of fine line drawings of abstracted pieces of human and animal anatomy superimposed on a spatial expanse of colours, swelling, blending and rolling like smoke or cloud, everlastingly voluminous. He lights them subtly with the rays of the sun or some hidden sacrificial fire of war or ancient rite. In any event, his statements on man's destiny are evocatively illumined with light and colour which do not disturb but ineffably suggest that in much beauty may also be great pain. Others like Lubna Agha, Naheed, Mashkoor Raza, Imran Mir, Mehar Afroze and Qudsia Azmat are also doing very fine works in this very tradition which, having thrived for almost three decades in Pakistan, can be seen as the mainstream of Pakistani painting.

Dr. Akbar Naqvi



Haji Muhammad Sharif

- 1889 Born in Patiala State
- 1906 Recognised as the court painter of Patiala.
- 1907 Produced his first painting.
- 1924 Exhibition in Great Britain; Awarded M.B.E.
- 1945 Appointed to teach miniature painting at the Mayo School of Arts, Lahore.
- 1965 Retired from the National College of Arts, Lahore, but continued as a visiting teacher at the Fine Arts Department of the Punjab University.
Died in Lahore.



A MASTER MINIATURIST

The ancestors of Haji Sharif, according to his son Mohammad Hanif, had come from Afghanistan some 200 years back, settled in Lahore and later went to the Sikh State of Patiala and stayed there until 1947. His grandfather, Allah Ditta married a lady from Jammu. He had considerable command over the art of miniature painting as is evident from the work in possession of the Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan at Islamabad. His renderings of dervishes and their attendants reflect the genre subjects of the period with the unromanticised figures done in realistic manner. His colours were rather subdued, therefore more normal. His line, sensitive and fine, was used for the contours as well as the depiction of details. In keeping with the subject matter, he had less ornamentation except for the 'arabesque' borders. Haji Sharif's father Basharatullah too was a painter. But his paintings in the collection of I.S.P. do not reflect the same mastery over drawing and details as did his son. His colours too are more bright and therefore, a bit too raw. When Sharif was born into this house, they aspired to make him a watch-maker, which was developing into quite a prestigious profession. But, on the intervention of the Maharajah of Patiala, the young Sharif was given a stipend and trained in the family art. He used to say that at the time of partition, he had already served for sixty years starting from the date of his birth.

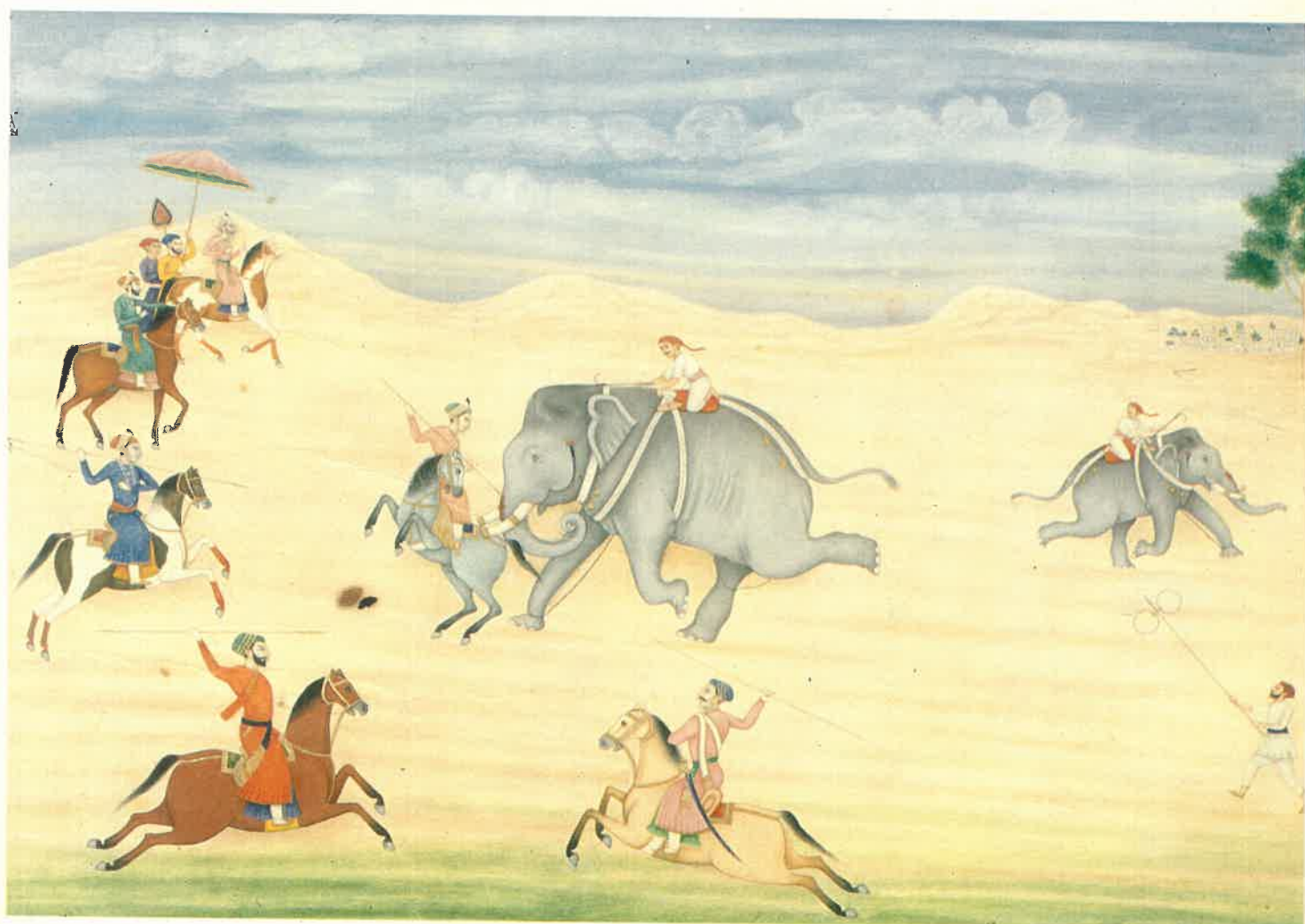
The early years of Pakistan were not conducive to the survival of artists. However after he had secured a job in the Mayo School of Arts, he continued painting and piling up his work for the better times, selling only occasionally. When the Shah of Iran visited Pakistan in 1952, he was presented a set of Haji Sharif's paintings. His hard work had paid off at last and from then on many foreign dignitaries were given such presents including Megapagel, Ikihito, Liu Shau Chi and Mrs. J. Kennedy.

THE LONG WAIT FOR RECOGNITION

When the Mayo School of Arts was elevated to the status of the diploma awarding National College of Arts in 1958, it no longer strove to preserve the ancient skill of Northern India. The change resulted in a number of casualties and the services of many experts in the ancient arts and crafts were dispensed with. But the services of Haji Sharif were retained. The then Principal Mr. Sponenborg in fact encouraged him to hold a one-man show at Alhamra in 1960. It was inaugurated by General Ayub Khan who also granted to Haji Sharif a monthly pension of Rs.200. In 1967, in recognition of his services, he was awarded the President's Medal for Pride of Performance. His now much-coveted works were exhibited at the German Embassy in 1962, and again at Karachi Arts Council in 1963. Ten years later, one such show was held in Islamabad.

PROCESSION OF AKBAR THE GREAT
26" x 18½", Water Colour

UNTITLED
17" x 13½", Water Colour



Having retired from the NCA in 1965, he continued as a visiting teacher at the University of Punjab for a couple of years. But he was growing old and his eyesight was failing. Having trained countless students, he had the satisfaction of having helped towards the continuation of the tradition.

Like most miniature painters, Haji Sharif was a traditionalist and worked from old works in his collection. His subjects consequently were historical, mythological and there were many small and full figure portraits. Processions of the Rajahs and kings generally were large compositions. In one such painting, the Maharajah is shown riding a horse escorted by other figures both riding and on foot. In another one, the equestrian monarch is being attacked by a Royal Bengal tiger. His depiction of the animals is superb yet it falls short of the skill of the Moghul painters. In the bigger pictures, he concentrates on large flat areas and does not seem to have time for minute details. Yet he was cautious enough to give the feel of a miniature painting by depicting weeds and ornamentation here and there. But that does not discredit him because those are really large pictures by the standard of miniature paintings. Haji Sharif is at his best in the small oval portraits both in bust and in full figure, mostly standing, attired in ornate royal costumes. His rendering of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Moghul emperor, is really very sensitive. He, very painstakingly, has shown the jewels in the crown and has drawn each hair in the beard. The profile of Noorjahan too gives Persian features. The full figure of Ali Mardan Khan, the Persian Governor of Qandahar who surrendered the city to the Moghuls and who reportedly designed the Shalamar gardens of Lahore, is one of the best of his paintings in the I.S.P. collection. It has been done in bright colours and rendered with microscopic details. His grandfather Allah Ditta had a liking for subdued colours suited to everyday reality with scanty ornamentation. Because of his lively personality, Haji Sharif could think of the beautiful facets of life too and took pride in his ancestral attachment to royalty. He executed his paintings in the colours that are bright but not raw as his father Basharatullah had done and who, judging by the work in the possession of I.S.P., was definitely an artist of lesser merit than Haji Sharif.

In his later works, Haji Sharif often left out stark white of the paper over which his brighter hues sparkled even more, and, his darks too gave a greater contrast. These works appeared to deviate from the old miniatures which seemed to have been done over pale surface. But, it was the old paper that had turned yellow. Haji Sharif's new paintings looked new. There have been some miniaturists who while reproducing old paintings forged them. Haji Sharif was honest. Though his work was reproduced from old copies, it had sufficient standing to enable him to sign proudly; Haji Mohammad Sharif, Artist, Lahore. He was the last of the long lineage of painters who had migrated in search of patronage from court to court only because they were loyal to their profession.

Dr. Ajaz Anwar





Abdur Rehman Chughtai

- 1897 Born at Lahore Sept. 21.
- 1916-17 Started painting
- 1916-20 Followed the style of the Bengal School
- 1926 Shows development of style to Moghul style in Soz-o-Saz.
- 1928 Muraqqa-i-Chughtai published
- 1920-30 Painted 200 Hindu and Buddhist subjects.
- 1932 Visited Europe to study European art
- 1934 Awarded title of 'Khan Bahadur' by the Government of India.
- 1937 Studied etching at the School of Photo Engraving, London.
- 1960 Awarded Hilal-i-Imtiaz by the Government of Pakistan.
- 1968 Published Amal-i-Chughtai
- 1975 Died Jan. 17 and buried in Lahore.



A TORCH-BEARER OF THE MUSLIM ART

Abdur Rahman Chughtai is one of Pakistan's best and most talented artist. In his large-sized water colours and immaculate etchings and aquatints, he manifests the changing socio-political attitudes and aspirations of South Asian Muslims. His earliest paintings from 1916 to the mid-1920s belong to the Bengal School style. However, unlike his Calcutta or Bombay contemporaries, Chughtai's pictorial orientation was not predominantly Hindu or Buddhist. He invented visual parallels for metaphors from Urdu and Persian poetry such as the lamp and the moth, the rose and the bulbul, and the waiting beloved. Chughtai's friendship and close association with the literati of Lahore reaffirmed and channelized his attraction to literature as a source for painting.

Soz-o-Saz (Fig.1) c.1926 captures the underlying current of passion and pathos ubiquitous in the Persian and Urdu ghazal. Long black tresses of the beloved (here grieving at the tomb of her lover) depict the poetic metaphor for endless dark nights of separation. The ornate lamp, which refers to her beauty, is so irresistible that lovers, like moths, are consumed by it. Architectural details, inspired by Jehangir's tomb, reflect

① Pure

① pure, faultless
② desire
③ *ساز*
④ *سوز*

⑤ Joining.
⑥ Present everywhere
at several places at a time
⑦ *سوز*
⑧ examples



the splendour and glory of the Mughal era. The sense of mourning presented in Soz-o-Saz constitutes a fitting metaphor for the loss of Muslim supremacy as expressed by Chughtai and his contemporaries.

Nevertheless, during the decades of 1920s and 1930s, with complete sincerity and lacking communal prejudices, Chughtai painted more than 200 Hindu and Buddhist subjects. Holi, Chughtai's interpretation of the colourful Hindu religious festival celebrated with great abandon, is nevertheless much more animated and sensual than the myriad of Pahari or Rajput miniatures featuring this theme. Radha's arching pose and exposed breasts are an enticement for Krishna, while couples embrace in the background rather than douse one another with coloured spray.

PERSONAL STYLE

By the late 1930s, Chughtai had evolved a personal style encompassing characteristics from Persian, Mughal, and Pahari miniature painting as well as Art Nouveau and hints of modern European influence from Van Gogh and Matisse. Highly stylized figures, rendered with consummate draftsmanship in flawless compositions, enact ideas or events from history, literature or indigenous traditions. Like Persian poetry, Chughtai's paintings may be interpreted on different levels, and supporting elements are requisite to understand the content.

His use of colour is sophisticated: Complementary and split-complementary schemes foster tension, while low-key monochromatic schemes inspire calm. Green is symbolic of Islam and piety, and red of passion. He drew from miniature paintings, local monuments, and the countryside for authenticity in costume and setting, but never failed to give the imagery and content a personalized twist.

- 9 example
- 10 highest in rank
- 11 opinion of liking and disliking
- 12 meaning
- 13 careless freedom
- 14 temple or Persiade
- 15 develop
- 16 encircle
- 17 leg
- 18 legal style
- 19 belonging naturally
- 20 as for success
- 21 break in two parts or more
- 22 genuine



While Chughtai's portraits of historical figures like Firdowsi, Mansur-al-Hallaj, Haroon al Rashid, or Tipu Sultan project a sense of pride in Muslim heritage, his paintings of Punjabi legends — Sassi Poono, Sohini Manhiwal and Heer Ranja reflect his local identity through a correct rendering of the flora at the River Chenab. The veracity of the setting intensified the suspense of her ill-fated love affair and the precipitous consequences. Is this the unfired ceramic pot that costs Sohini her life as she clutches it helplessly in her last attempt to cross the River Chenab to meet her lover?

MUGHAL THEMES

Mughal themes were perhaps his favourite subjects, particularly Shah Jahan, whose chief architect was a paternal ancestor of Chughtai, and Jehangir, whom he often painted beside Nur Jahan with a clever narrative twist. In these paintings (Nur Jahan assumes the aggressive leadership role, while Jehangir is shown as the aesthete. Nur Jahan stands on the veranda above Jehangir having let fly her falcon. She is centrally placed, shown full-figure with her arm extended above Jehangir's head; whereas the figure of the king is partially hidden. He clings to the pillar, dangling a cord in a manner more feminine than manly. It is possible Chughtai is making reference to Jehangir's preference for artistic pursuits, painting in particular, and his Queen's de facto control when Jehangir became debilitated by liquor and drugs.

23 Old story from
24 Fast

25

26 to have great sense
of beauty

27 go after

28 Mak. weak

29 drink



Chughtai was among the first Indian artists to make a serious study of art in museums in Europe. In 1932, he returned from London with a complete set of Studio magazine, then in 1937 he studied etching at the School of Photo Engraving, London. His etchings, considered by some critics to be the best in the sub-continent, are often more mysterious and difficult to interpret than his paintings. Kashmiri Woodcutter exemplifies the plight of Kashmiri peasants. The scantily-clad labourer bends with the burden of his load and his head hangs in utter despair. Gnarled trees with leafless branches fill the distant background repeating the shape and texture of the woodcutter and his bundle. A proposed book on these etchings may soon go to press, and the artist has already published four books on his paintings (several on his own press in Lahore). A fifth one on his Hindu Buddhist themes was published in New Delhi. The Indian government honoured him as Khan Bahadur in 1934, and the Pakistan government awarded him Hilal-i-Imtiaz in 1959.

RE-EVALUATION

Though recognized as a major artist of the sub-continent, he is categorized by Indian art critics as a follower of the Bengal School. For some years after the creation of Pakistan, Chughtai and his contemporaries were criticized for not being progressive. The new nation wanted to wipe the slate clean, forget the past and move ahead. Chughtai's historical and cultural subjects were too poignant a reminder for the confused identity of a population after more than one hundred years of colonial status. More recently, however, influential members of the Pakistan art community have effected a positive re-evaluation of Chughtai's artistic genius and historical contribution.

Marcella C. Nesom

30) Manner

31 total, complete

32 the state of howing
lost

33

34 deeply moving keen

35

36 political



OPINION

In a letter to Dr. Abdullah Chughtai: Being a draftsman myself, I can highly appreciate this quality in the work of your brother, the painter, M.A. Rahman Chughtai.

Pablo Picasso

It is a paradox that completely modern artist (M.A. Rahman Chughtai) is widely credited with the renaissance of Muslim Art in Pakistan.

Jacob Ball Teshewa
U.N.O. 1963

I have always tried to pursue originality in my own art. An artist, who imitates, commits suicide just because he has nothing for the contentment or elevation of his soul. Art flourishes only among living nations.

A.R. Chughtai

There is exquisite refinement of mood, and method, a lyrical favour in every line.

The Studio

I admire the rare gift of poetic feeling which is revealed in the paintings and especially the lovely lines.

Lawrence Binyon

Your perfect command over lines and the delicate colouring of your pictures have a great appeal.

Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore

Before Chughtai, Islamic painting had never developed beyond the anecdotal and episodic, whereas by Chughtai's brush it became interpretative. Until the emergence of Chughtai, painting had occupied the status of a minor art in Islam ... but now as an interpretative art, it bids fair to challenge Christian and the Buddhist civilization.

Dr. James Dickie
The Times, London 1976





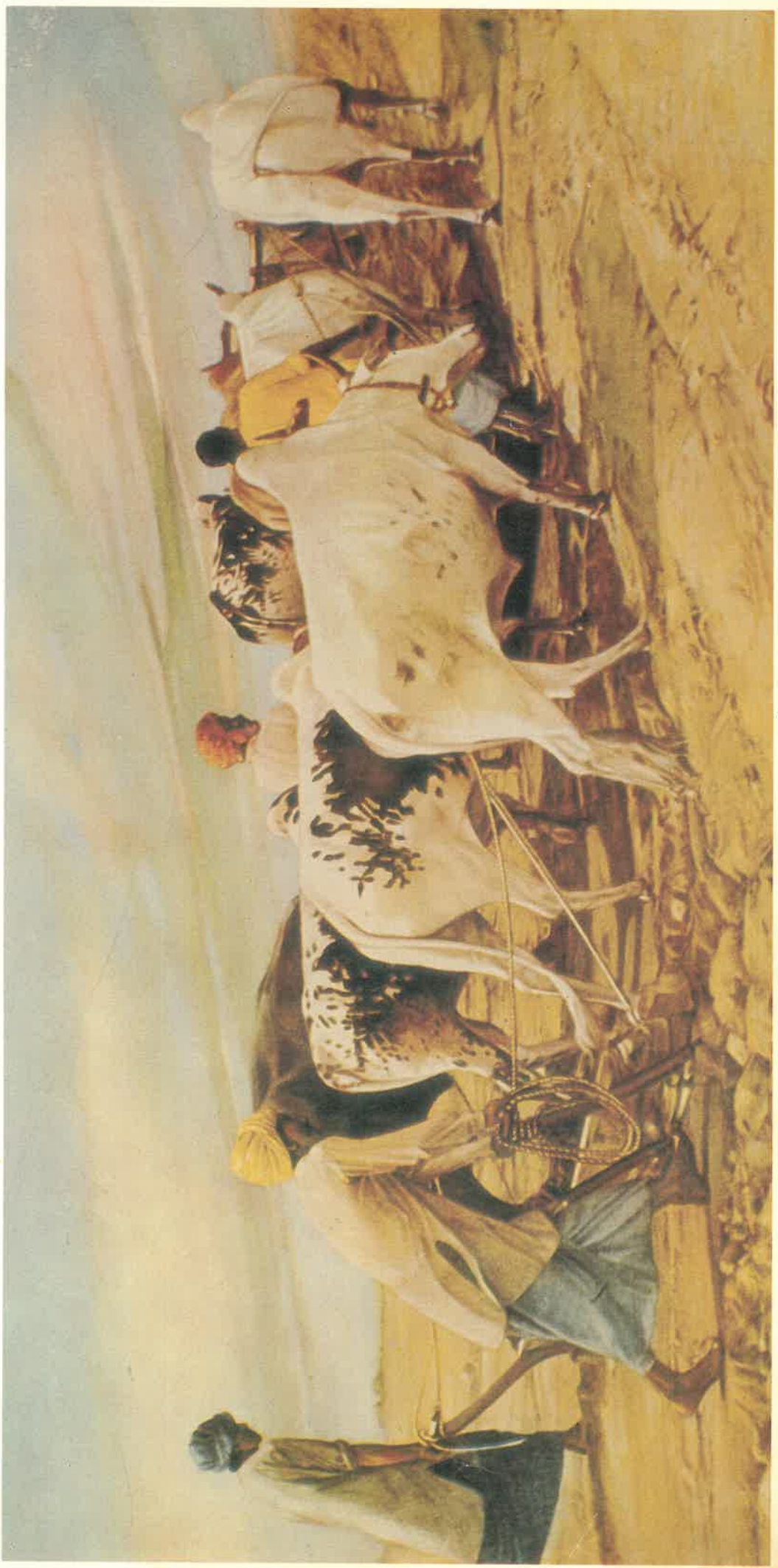
Ustad Allah Bukhsh

- 1885 Born at Wazirabad, Punjab
- 1890 Started to learn painting from a local commercial artist.
- 1903 First exhibition of his miniatures in Lahore.
- 1904-32 Worked at various places as artist, teacher and sign-board painter.
- 1932-37 Exhibitions at Patiala Durbar, Lahore, Peshawar and Murree.
- 1960 Awarded President's Tamgha-i-Imtiaz
- 1978 Died



AN ARTIST OF ROMANCE

Ustad Allah Bukhsh is one of the prolific painters who worked incessantly, and was often found shifting from one canvas to another. With conventional rigorous training, primarily self-imposed, he distinguished himself among his contemporaries as a painter of historic scenes from our folk poetry, and popular scenes from daily life. ~~This folk idiom made him~~ unique among his contemporary painters, thus the popular thematic subject described in the narrative fashion made him popular among the masses of Pakistan. His work however did not get the same level of acceptance among the artists as most of them failed to comprehend the novelty, spontaneity and the freshness of his art. They treated his work as photographic reproduction or mere book illustrations. In effect, these artists could never feel the art of Allah Bukhsh as something original. They maintained that through personal experience a new culture could grow. It is what separates him from them. It is true that his art differs radically from modern art because of its naturalistic simplicity, intensity of theme, and the lyricism of colours. As a matter of fact, Allah Bukhsh's work represents the cultural milieu of the Punjab, in which the peasant has a rugged monumental stature while the young women have a languid, soft, doe-eyed beauty. It is for this that the name of Allah Bukhsh stands out as a symbol of this culture. He belonged to this earth, and so does his art, which he himself asserted "I paint what is in me" and further adds "The eye is the best guide for the hand; that is all there is to it. The rest depends only on work, on continuous, consistent discipline".



NATURALISTIC STYLE

Rooted to the middle strata of the society and deeply aware of his cultural traditions, Ustad Allah Bukhsh mirrors the peasant life in all its diversity through a strong conviction, which originates from the facts of daily life. These facts are narrated in naturalistic style and every object painted on his canvas is recognizable within the frame-work of the picture. His paintings do not stir a spectator's imagination to visualize any other object in the painting which is not there. As a result, he is an iconographer of the rites and life of the people of the Punjab; his paintings entitled Charkha, Spring Time, Jatti Punjab Di and Tilling the Land, are a few samples. He is a staunch painter of visual which brings his art near to a French artist Chasserian who was inspired by the work of Ingress and Delacroix. Allah Bukhsh, similarly, has tried to create a blend of Romanticism and linear lyricism of the Neo-classical period. He builds up his paintings with the help of subdued colours and solid wiry lines, which sometimes undulate. However, at times the anatomy of the figures is not so convincing and strong. But by avoiding the deep shadows, his art comes near to a mural painting where flat decorative colours are rendered. In Allah Bukhsh's work, the elaborate folds of the drapery do not harmonise with the form of the figures which consequently mar the total effect of a painting and appears to be unnecessarily included in the picture. The planes in his painting do not sharply turn to emulate a bravura effect perfected in Baroque painting, instead these with little modelling tend to produce a decorative atmosphere, but without much density of air.



ARTIST AS A VISIONARY

His landscapes continually present the sovereign side of thematic sequence e.g., in his painting *The Poet*, a poet is shown surrounded by the leafless trees, spiky branches, thus, heightening the bitter effect of the atmosphere which is further increased by the use of low key colour scheme in green, purple, and tones of blues. As a result, this painting shows the imaginative, and visionary power of the artist.

Throughout his painting career, there has been a link between his canvases through the help of soft chiaroscuro. As each canvas represents a major endeavour in which Allah Bukhsh exercises a free choice over subject matter, one always finds relief and joy to look at his work.

His compositions anticipate the arrangement of colour combination of lyrical origin with principal figures in their receptive attitude. He deliberately arranges the figures in such a manner as to make the part of their bodies go out of the picture frame. It appears as if the figures are just entering or leaving, thus creating a momentary motion in the painting. His work reflects the culture of our time which, therefore, is a constant source of inspiration for the coming generations. However, Allah Bukhsh has failed to establish a school which stems from his style, though a few youngsters, are now, trying to follow his trail.

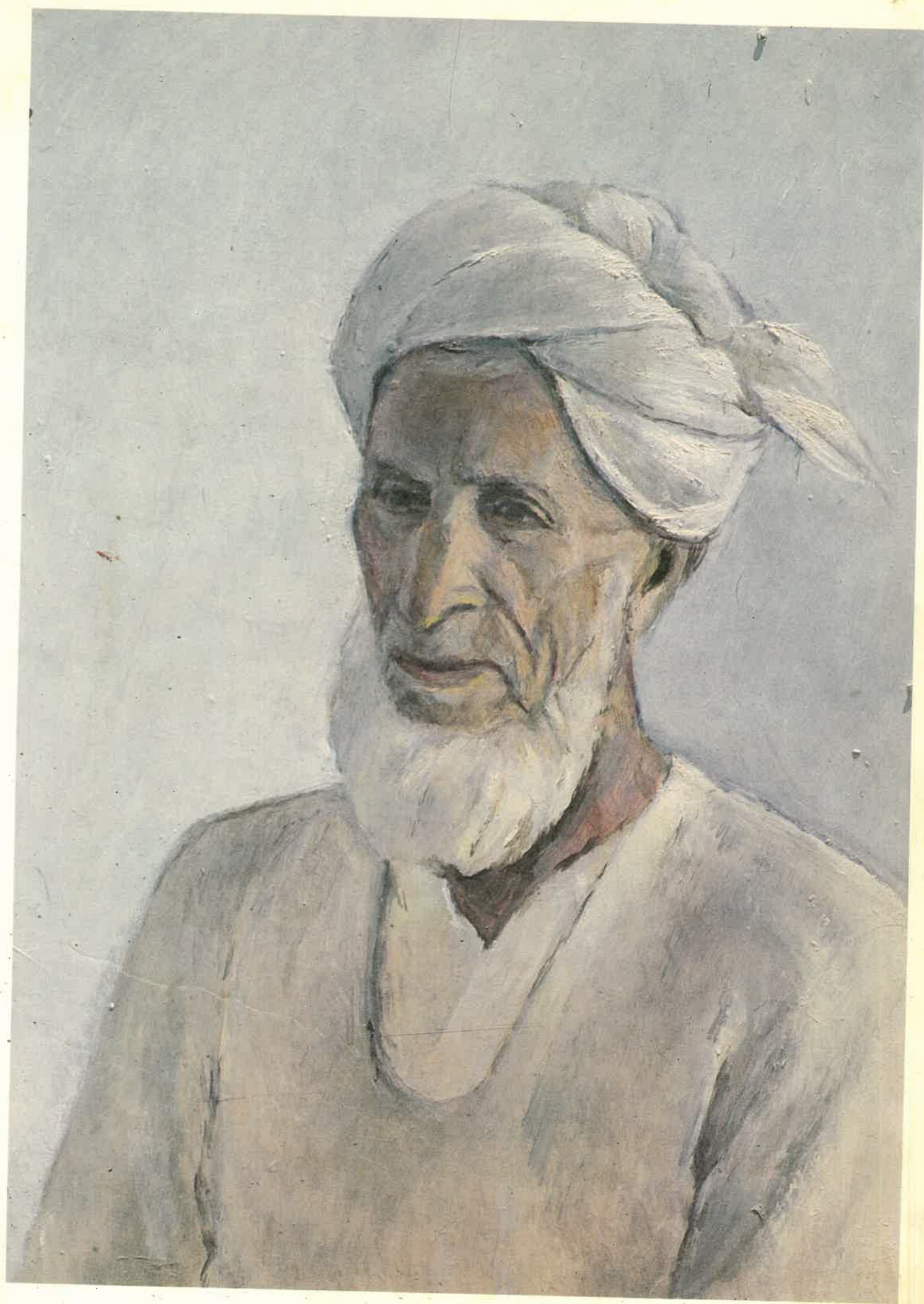
Dr. Khalid Mahmud





Khalid Iqbal

- 1929 Born at Simla
- 1949-52 Art Teacher at the Aitchison College, Lahore
- 1952-55 Studied Fine Art at the Slade School of Art, University College London.
- 1955 Appointed lecturer, Department of Fine Arts, University of the Punjab, Lahore.
- 1965 Appointed Professor and Head of the Fine Arts Department, National College of Arts, Lahore.
- 1976 Awarded fellowship of the National College of Arts and promoted as Principal NCA Lahore
Given the Quaid-i-Azam Award in painting
- 1980 Awarded the President's Medal for Pride of Performance.



A MODERNIST REALIST

As a teacher while demanding discipline, Khalid Iqbal encouraged creative and imaginative expression. He seldom imposed his will or ideas on others, which is so often the case with many teachers. Later at the Punjab University Fine Arts Department and the National College of Arts, he continued to be a greatly respected painter and an outstanding teacher. Going by his own statement, however, he never liked teaching and yet at the same time, with one or two talented, young painters he found it a great fun. He taught because he had to earn a living but he always hoped that one day he would paint, "If for nothing else but to find out if he had it in him".

EARLY INFLUENCES

When Khalid looks back, he finds that the person who exercised on him "the biggest influence in every way as a painter and otherwise" was William Coldstream, the Principal of the Slade School of Art London, which he joined after leaving Aitchison in 1952.

Khalid Iqbal was at the Slade for three years. He came back to Pakistan in 1955, and on his return was asked by the Department of Fine Arts of the Punjab University to start art classes for boys. Before this, the arts had been considered appropriate for women only. He became so involved with his teaching that his own work as a painter suffered.

He did some extremely skilful portraits at this time but on the whole his work of the period is restrained and he relied on his technical virtuosity to build form and record tone. The modern painting which made its impact a few decades earlier in England, had now also reached Pakistan.

Consequently when Khalid reached Lahore, the conflict between realism and abstraction was on. Despite this, his paintings were well received by the modern painters at Lahore. Since he was the only painter of his type, he had to be more or less on his own, and work by himself, and this lack of inter-action may have induced a state of complacency reflected in his earlier work. Even at the National College of Arts as the Head of the Fine Arts Department, and later as the Principal, his painting output was little. But then, almost immediately after resigning from the National College, paintings came pouring out with unusual spontaneity. The great skill and technique of painting which was impressively demonstrated in the early days, looked a trifle studied in comparison with the present works.

Common sights are intimately perceived with feeling and interpreted without conscious application. Forms are not laboured and the picture is built up by brushwork where each stroke seems to have casually landed with intuitive precision. Sometimes a few marks may betray that the artist



has very carefully mapped out his subject but usually one does not get the feeling of a composition which has been strictly deliberated upon. Each brush stroke and impression contributes to the whole by helping to build form or represent the required tone and nuance of colour. Most of the picture is worked with very thin paint. Where a surface is reflecting the sun or thick wild grasses are growing at close hand, he expresses light and texture by applying thicker and heavier paint. Khalid maintains that no object painted by the human eye and the human mind can be exactly like the object itself.

Intellectual Refinement

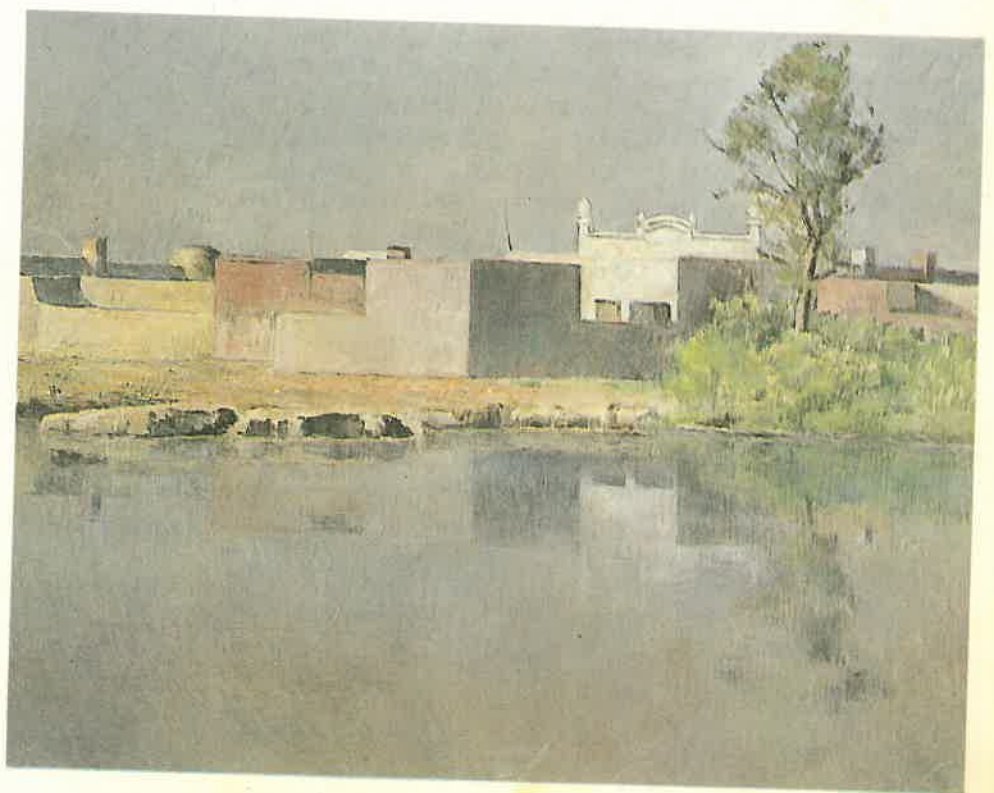
Khalid Iqbal thinks that in the context of the landscape of our country a painter is fortunate. He is seeing it directly, because no one has painted it before. Khalid's landscapes present his particularised reactions with intellectual refinement and complexity which has seldom been achieved in our landscape painting. His work has influenced generations of landscape and figurative painters in our country. In his own quiet manner, he has exercised greater influence on our painting than perhaps any other painter of his generation.

Khalid Iqbal lives close to the outer fringes of the city where suburban housing schemes are constantly pushing their way into the rural landscape. At places, the urban elements bringing pollution and ugliness with them intermingle with the rural. The artist however makes no effort to avoid them. An electric transformer resting on a steel tower next to a delicate acacia, or a municipal water storage tank stationed among wild shrubs and grasses are depicted without comment or disdain. Since Khalid lives close to the spots where he paints, and these are easily accessible, he works in a leisurely manner. He can go to his spots again and again. There is no hurry, and this fits in ideally with his temperament and technique. If he had to make long journeys, he may have had to review his approach.

DESIRE FOR CAPTURING THE CHANGING MOODS OF NATURE

Most of his recent works express greater desire to capture the changing moods of nature and atmosphere. The early morning mists, the sun-flooded afternoons, deep evening shadows, set the time and mood of the painting, while winter grasses, prickly shrubs, barren branches, silent trees and stagnant gray ponds lend a curious intensity to one's feelings and thoughts. The artist would however insist that for him painting is first and foremost a problem of painting. But one must be aware that an artist's consciousness is outside his conscious control and that an artist's state of mind by some curious process comes through, giving to painting its life and meaning.

Ijaz-ul-Hassan



OPINION

Khalid Iqbal is a modest, reclusive, publicity-shy individual whose personal painting style and methodology as an art educator have profoundly affected the development of painting in Pakistan. From the late Fifties, when painters were imitating Cubism to internationalize their art, Khalid Iqbal taught his students at 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. He excelled first as a portrait painter, leaving his imprint on his students who have subsequently become famous as portrait and figure painters. Turning his attention to the special qualities of the Punjab landscape, Khalid Iqbal fostered a movement of Punjab landscape painting. He seeks to capture the quality of light in the Punjab and its varying effect in the different seasons. His delicate, finely rendered, carefully observed vignettes of nature have inspired an impressive and capable following.

Dr. Marcella C. Nesom

Inspirer of an entire school in landscape art, painter and teacher Khalid Iqbal continues to ply a sensitive brush, using the oil medium to interpret the natural environment around his home base of Lahore.

Grounded in a classical, academic training, this senior artist does not venture into the realm of non-representational painting. He exercises a selective faculty to re-create the rural vista, trees, fields, skies and figures, producing landscapes of great subtlety and "atmospheric" quality. Time, mood and place seem to blend, to reveal and capture the beauty of a mundane, transitory scene.

Through his careful perception and polished technique, he places before the viewer the familiar as lyrical, even mystical.

Mariam Habib

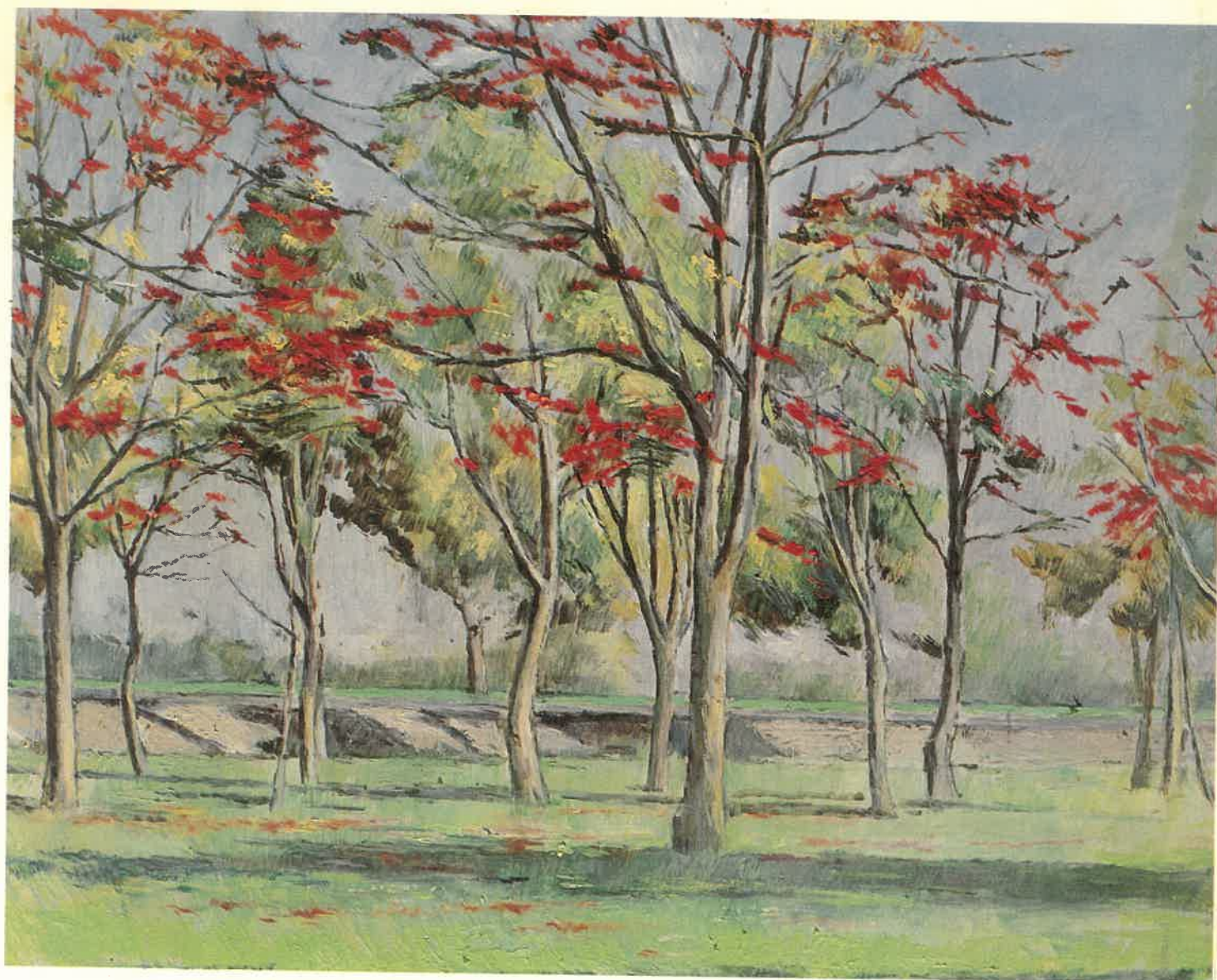
Khalid Iqbal's landscapes capture all the land's seasons and shifting light. The saline, barren stretches, covered with bush and bramble, spotted with reeds and weeds, sit sweltering under the summer sun. The sky is burnt to a metallic gray over bleached mudhouses. The flat terrain after the arrival of the Monsoon becomes dramatic with reflections and fields bursting with fertility. The winter mist lingers among bushes and lifts into trees in the subdued morning light. The trees of the land -- Kikar, Shisham, Mango, Pipal, Bhor, Berry -- filter the light, cast shadows and shades, or stand as timeless witnesses against the fading day.

Khalid Iqbal's achievement has two dimensions: the personal and the public. He exemplifies the best of visual realism in his personal works. At the public level, as a teacher, he has initiated a whole new way to seeing.

M. Athar Tahir
M.A. (Oxon)

He is the first artist who captured the effect of light in the Punjab which is one of the greatest contribution by this artist. This is yearned by his contemporaries who flocked around him for his advice. In consequence, a number of artists follow his steps in their work and seek glimmer of Mr. Khalid Iqbal. In short, he is a complete artist by himself and a living legend in the field of pictorial art.

Dr. Khalid Mahmud
Chairman Fine Arts Deptt.
Punjab University





Sadequain

- 1930 Born at Amroha, U.P. (India)
- 1948 Graduated from Agra University
- 1954-60 Several one-man exhibitions, executed murals in various government and public buildings.
- 1960 Awarded "Tamgha-e-Imtiaz".
First prize in all Pakistan National Exhibition of paintings.
Went to Paris at invitation of the French Committee of the International Association of the Plastic Arts.
- 1961 Participated in the Biennale of Paris and awarded 'Laureate Biennale de Paris' by the International Jury of Critics.
- 1962 Awarded President's Medal for Pride of Performance
- 1962 Exhibition at Maison du Culture, Le Havre (France)
- 1962-87 Innumerable solo exhibitions in Pakistan and all over the world.
- 1987 Last years of his life devoted to calligraphies and worked till February 12, 1987. Died in Karachi.



AN ARTIST WITH A ZEST FOR LIFE

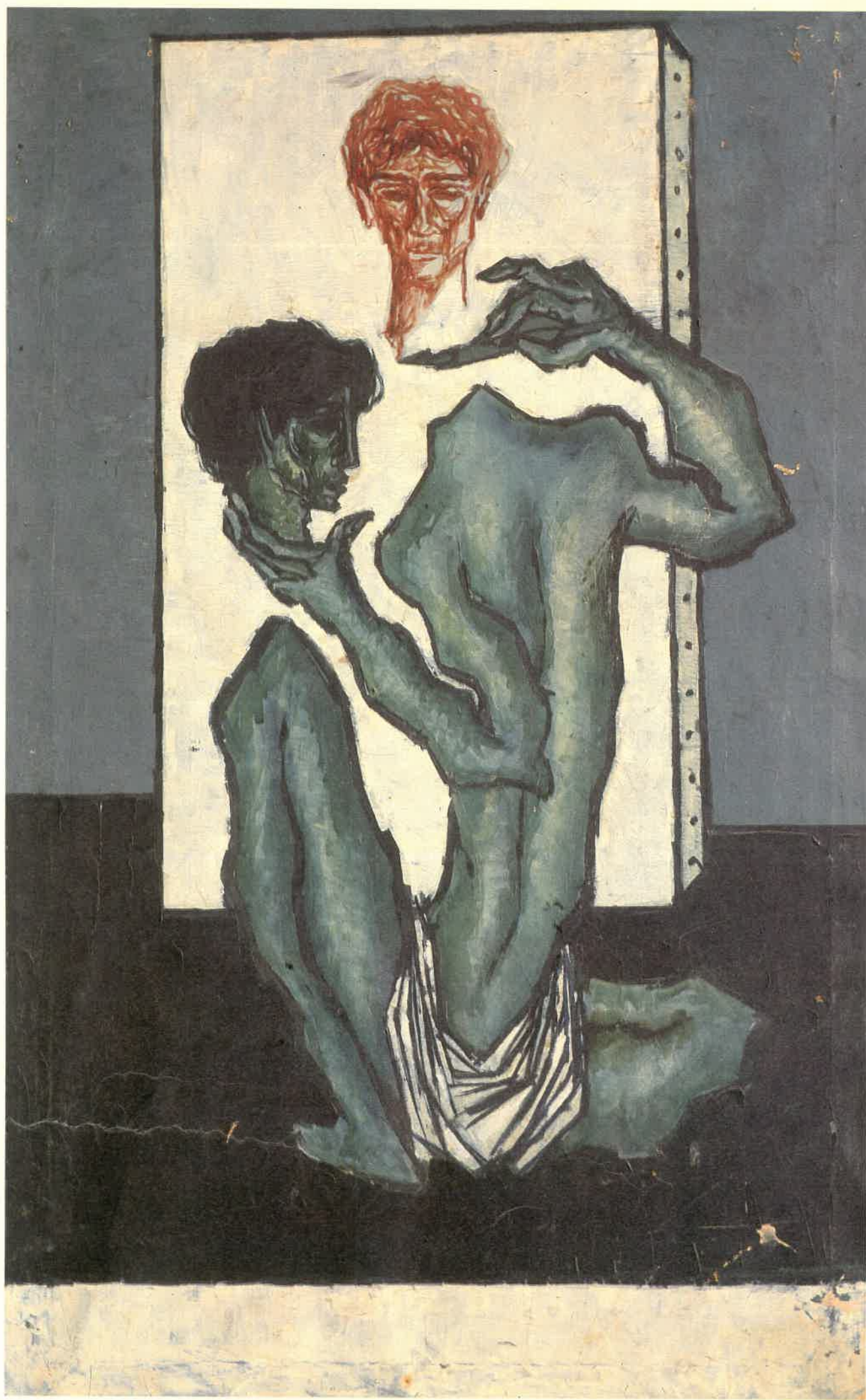
Sadequain was undoubtedly the most celebrated amongst the artists of Pakistan. During the last 25 years, he has produced an amazingly large volume of work which has earned him respect and admiration both at home and abroad.

Sadequain's return from Paris was marked by his large mural at the Mangla Power Station in 1967. His success in Paris during 1962 was established through the Press reviews, such as one appearing in the daily *Le Figaro* (16th October, 1962), which said;

"Sadequain adds up the impression of space, density, volume and the reality of matter, which transforms abstract thought into a material fact in plastic".

A dozen more notes of appreciation on Sadequain's works brought him to the limelight. His maturity of style and powerful diction gave Sadequain an esteemed position in the art circles of the West and at home. The works, until then, were figurative. In 1962, he was awarded the President's Medal for Pride of Performance. It may not be an exaggeration to say that due to his pleasing art and the gigantic volume of his work Sadequain can be compared with any one of his contemporary painters both at home and abroad. He has evolved a personal style which is universally recognised.

Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan established an Art Gallery in the name of Sadequain in Islamabad to make possible the study of his works pertaining to different periods. This gallery will, in future, serve a very useful purpose, as it has on permanent display works of the artist representing different phases of his career. Among them are his self-portraits, his calligraphies and other compositions.



DISTORTION

The study of Sadequain's method of distorting figures is important in getting conversant with the development of various styles of his portraits. In his famous mural inside the power station at Mangla, the figures have been distorted. By making the feet very strong, he emphasizes the steadfast efforts of man in achieving development on earth. In illustrating Iqbal, such distortion becomes more conspicuous. In these illustrations, the artist is really not presenting a realistic portrayal of things and people known to us in our daily life. Nor has the method of the surrealistic art been adopted. Sadequain has an idealistic approach and his treatment is very individualistic.

During early Sixties, and late Fifties when Sadequain painted more realistically, the distortions were used to emphasize misery, hatred and poverty.

MYSTIC'S APPROACH TO ART

During the period he spent at Gadani, about 35 miles away from Karachi, Sadequain began by painting cacti which served as a symbol of life force. It was a mystic's approach and the artist was duly rewarded for the recognition he extended to cacti. This series can best be represented by his "LAST SUPPER".

Sadequain is both socially, and intellectually a sensitive person. His deep spiritual involvement in an ordinary human situation, reveals to his creative mind a message which he is capable of preserving for generations to come through his artistic medium.

Sadequain came out with his Qur'anic calligraphy for the first time in Ramadan 1388 A.H. 1968. There was a great response for his works based on the illustrations of Surah Rehman. The popularity of the works could be estimated from the fact that Sadequain made reproductions of these paintings on different sizes which were in demand in Pakistan and abroad.



BEAUTY OF CALLIGRAPHY

Arabic script, in its conventional styles, and due to its adaptability, has a tremendous design value. It needs strict discipline to acquire skill in these styles. Sadequain took up calligraphy because of two reasons. Firstly, Sadequain was exposed to the beauty of calligraphy at a much earlier age through his father, who was a calligraphist. This gave Sadequain a taste for the line work. In his earlier paintings of cacti, Sadequain displayed his interest in line work rather than in colours. Some of these paintings use a very limited palette. Secondly, his interest in calligraphy stemmed from his quest for a new subject. During the years of his stay in Europe, Sadequain had exhausted himself with objective representation. On his return home, he found the artists engaged in a struggle to revive Islamic values in various artistic fields. Some of the artists including Shakir Ali had taken initiative in experimenting with calligraphy as the basis of their painting.

EXPERIMENTATION

Sadequain wanted to enlarge the field of his creativity by experimentation and did not like limitations. He broke away from the conventional paintings on small canvas and worked on large murals. Later, he made calligraphies on goat skins, canvas and slabs of marble. The irregular surface gave him new challenges which he skilfully conquered. Towards the choice of medium also, he displayed the same same of accepting challenges.

Sadequain could find the calligraphic basis for his paintings to illustrate poetry and the Holy Quran. In his illustrations of Iqbal and Quranic Surahs, his subject gained an intellectual character, and he could use calligraphy with greater freedom without following the conventional restrictions.

The calligraphies by Sadequain should be taken as his artistic statements, although he makes his calligraphy illustrative of poetic or religious themes of the text. He has retained all features of the conventional book illustration with a difference and in his personal style. The geometric character of the conventional book illustration is missing in Sadequain who has replaced it with the artistic treatment peculiar to his genius.

Sadequain is a universal artist. His images are understood around the world. He has been invited by various countries to exhibit his works. He painted in many countries and will always be remembered for having made a cultural impact as a Pakistani artist wherever he exhibited.

Safi Safdar



ہو حلقہ یاران کو بیست و ہشت و نود و ہشت
رزم حق و باطل ہو تو فدا دے ہو وین

مصافحہ نگین سیر فوالد پیداکر

OPINION

"He was one of the greatest painters of his age. He dominated the art stage of the world for more than three decades. During these three decades, he earned profound respect and eternal fame for Pakistan and for himself".

Editor, ISP Review
Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan

"I am a painter of the expression of hunger and pain, I am not a drawing room artist".

Sadequain

"All his critics and admirers agree on one thing: Sadequain's commitment to contemporary life with all the joys, sorrows, promises and deprivations that form the total reality and aspects of its diverse currents. In bringing all these into his perception as an artist and expressing them through the powerful idiom of his paintings and murals, he often consciously leaned towards the poor and the deprived".

Daily DAWN

"Sadequain had become so much of an artistic currency that few stopped to have a fresh look at his genius. He had been so much a part of the living landscape that it will take time to get used to the idea of his having passed away".

Daily Frontier Post

"He was a lion-hearted painter who could paint by the acres, displaying a phenomenon of his prolific creativity. It was the crushing pressure of his creative self which drove him to paint day in and day out. Never before was an artist of such creative stamina and output quantum to be found amidst ourselves".

Daily Morning News

"I agree with a friend who said that Sadequain was a one-man school which admitted no masters and left no pupils".

LAHORI
Daily DAWN



وہ لوگ تکیہ لگا کر اپنے فطرت پرست ہوئے جو کہ جنت کے آسمان پر رہنے والے ہوں
یہ تہذیب کا نزہت ہے جس کے لئے اللہ تعالیٰ اپنے پیغمبر کو کون کون سے
نہایت کے متکرم ہوئے ہوں۔



Aslam Kamal

1939 23rd January born at Sialkot.

1965-87 Many group and one-man exhibitions in and outside Pakistan.

Done more than 12,000 designs for book dust covers.

ASIAN 1 KAT MAL 82



PIONEER IN CALLIGRAPHIC PAINTING

Aslam Kamal started his artistic career as a humble book jacket designer but he soon discovered his latent talent for an entirely new kind of calligraphy which has proved to be a trend setter. His great success as a dust cover designer won him many prizes and his work was widely acclaimed. In his designs for dust covers of books, he had to experiment with calligraphy and the first independent effort he made in 1965 when he created a new form of calligraphy published in the Jang Number of Naqoosh.

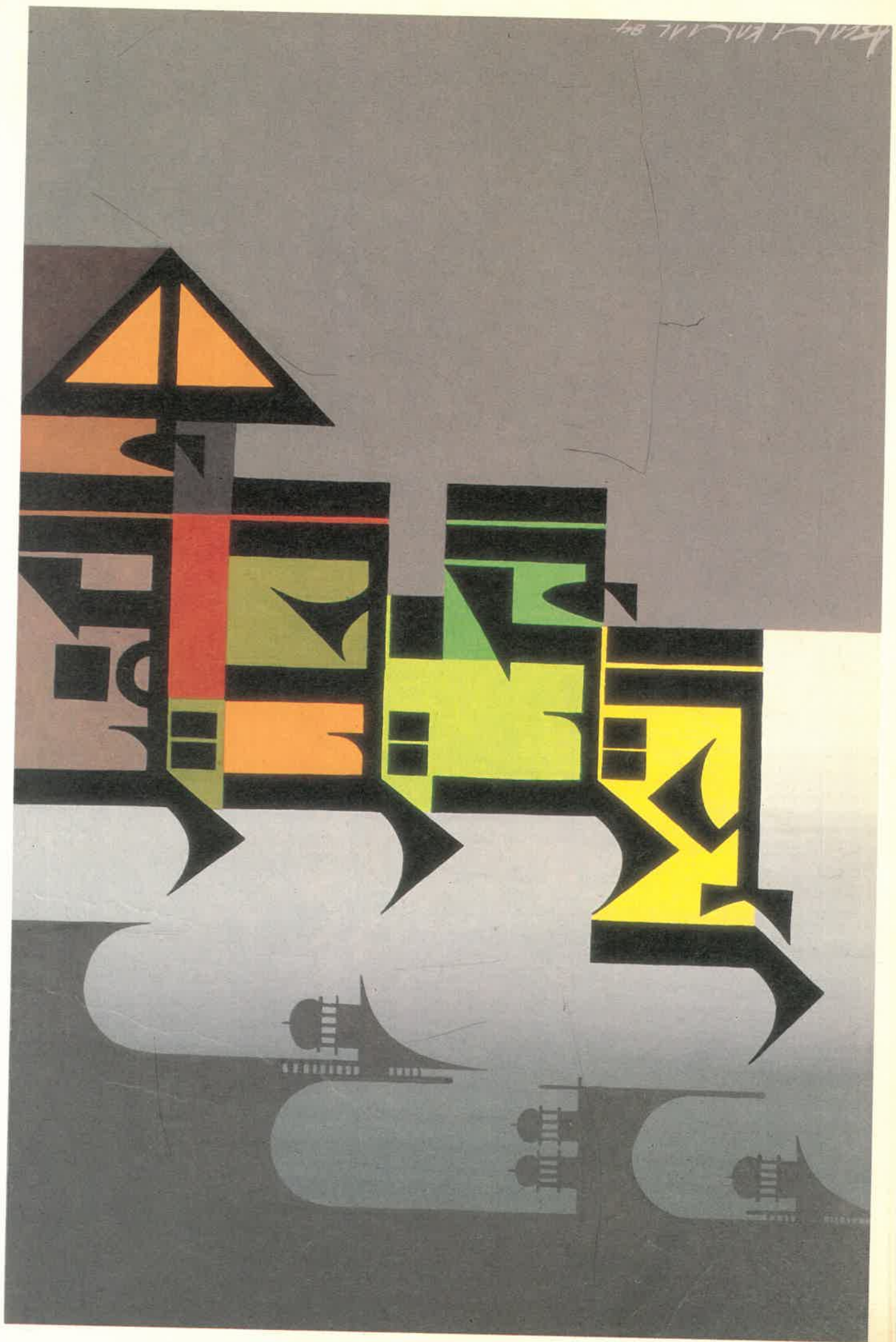
Although the style of this Kalima is quite different from the one which has been widely acclaimed, his venture was appreciated. Encouraged, Aslam Kamal held his first one-man exhibition of calligraphic paintings in Lahore, followed by another in Rawalpindi in 1975. In 1977, on the occasion of International Congress on Iqbal, Aslam Kamal was invited by the Lahore Museum to participate in a Group Exhibition of Four Prominent Pakistani Artists on Iqbal. His ink-drawings and paintings interpreting Iqbal's poetry established Aslam Kamal not only as an undisputed painter but, at the same time, also a magnificent interpreter of Iqbal's message.

Now, Aslam Kamal's dominant passion was calligraphic paintings. The last one decade provided him enough opportunities to show his mettle. In the entire Islamic world — particularly in Pakistan, it has been a golden era for calligraphy, once the Queen of Islamic Arts. At home and abroad, government organisations and institutions did a lot to provide incentives both for artists and calligraphers to join hands for revitalising this otherwise dying art. In Pakistan, many responded warmly. Several painters and designers experimented with calligraphy in their painting.

Earlier, there had been successful attempts in this direction by artists like Shakir Ali and Mohammad Hanif Ramay. But this is not the place to discuss their works and achievements in this field. Similarly, several traditional calligraphists tried to give their writings a look of painting. Unfortunately, the blending of the two arts was not always successful. Among those who tried, only a few succeeded in achieving the goal. Aslam Kamal is one of those who achieved the desired goal. Gradually, he succeeded in establishing a style of his own. Since then, he has held several one-man and group exhibitions of his calligraphic paintings.

ARCHITECTURAL FORMS

Aslam Kamal paints mostly in gouache (tempera or poster) medium. In his paintings, Aslam Kamal uses soft but vivid colours — greys, greens, yellows and glowing whites, which blend harmoniously into one another,



thus creating a wonderful orchestration of colours and forms. The verses are always in traditional black lettering super-imposed on diapers of vivid and bright colours. Beside angular lettering of his calligraphy, the most characteristic feature of his paintings is the use of architectural forms and motifs — domes, minarets and arches — which invariably appear in silhouette on the darker part of his canvas. Another interesting aspect of his use of these architectural forms is that these always appear suspended in the air, giving the whole painting an ethereal character. Here the mundane things appear to be meeting the distant heaven and the sacred writings are seen suddenly and boldly coming out of unfathomed space — the realm of our spiritual guidance.

Monuments and calligraphy have also gone together in Islamic history. Aslam Kamal loves this tradition but, still, is not enslaved by it. Instead of calligraphy decorating monuments, as is commonly seen in the Muslim buildings, he uses architecture to adorn his calligraphy. This reversing of a set tradition is pleasing and acceptable. This is not all. By using architectural motifs, Aslam Kamal brings landscaping in his paintings. But, here too, he offers a special treatment. Thus, instead of spreading his setting on the ground, he makes it descend from above or come out looming from some celestial depths in the background. This makes his paintings stand free of anything which is earthly. Instead, these are sublime, delicate and empyrean.

FUSION OF STYLES

In calligraphy too, Aslam Kamal's style is quite distinct and individualistic. He combines 'suls', 'Naskh' and 'kufic' letters and reshapes them into geometrical forms with his basic unit of a triangle. In place of traditional broad horizontal space of 5 to 6 lines, he confines his lettering to two basic horizontal lines and a third supplementary one. He turns the curved 'meem' into his peculiar triangular or solid square forms. His 'noon' is now a complete crescent, his 'heys' are in the form of two triangles — solid and hollow respectively, joined together. Similarly, his 'rey' and 'dal' are actually a mixture of Naskh and Kufic forms. As Aslam Kamal does not use 'pen' (Qalam) for his calligraphic paintings, his brush (Moo-e-Qalam) gives him full freedom of design even when doing calligraphy. His design can move freely from left to right or from top to bottom or vice versa.

Aslam Kamal in his search for reality claims to have landed from 'light' and 'mind' not into the unconsciousness but into perception or intuition which takes him into a realm of spiritual sublimity provided by divine guidance. Abstraction is defined as creation of order out of chaos and Aslam Kamal claims to be on the way to creating an order under his divine guidance through his calligraphic pictorials.

Dr. Saif Ur Rahman Dar



OPINION

Aslam Kamal's work was as ancient as Kufic Calligraphy. In another way, it was the most modern art as in avoiding the figures, the ingenious Muslim mind created the abstract forms in geometric patterns.

Khalid Saeed Butt
DG, Idara Saqafat-e-Pakistan

Aslam Kamal is a highly creative talent. He not only does calligraphy but also makes painting of calligraphy. And in relation to the composition, he possesses masterly skill to exploit all the requirements, principles and elements of fine art.

Mrs. Abbasi Abidi

... But the composition is methodical and at the same time intricate, governed by a sense of cosmic proportion. His lines and dots avoid movement, because he does not need it. What, I think, he is trying to depict is not the cosmic rhythm, which falls rather out of the way for painting but the sense of stability, that comes out of God's act of creation through arresting the fleetingness of matter and giving it a stable shape in the midst of vibrating nothingness.

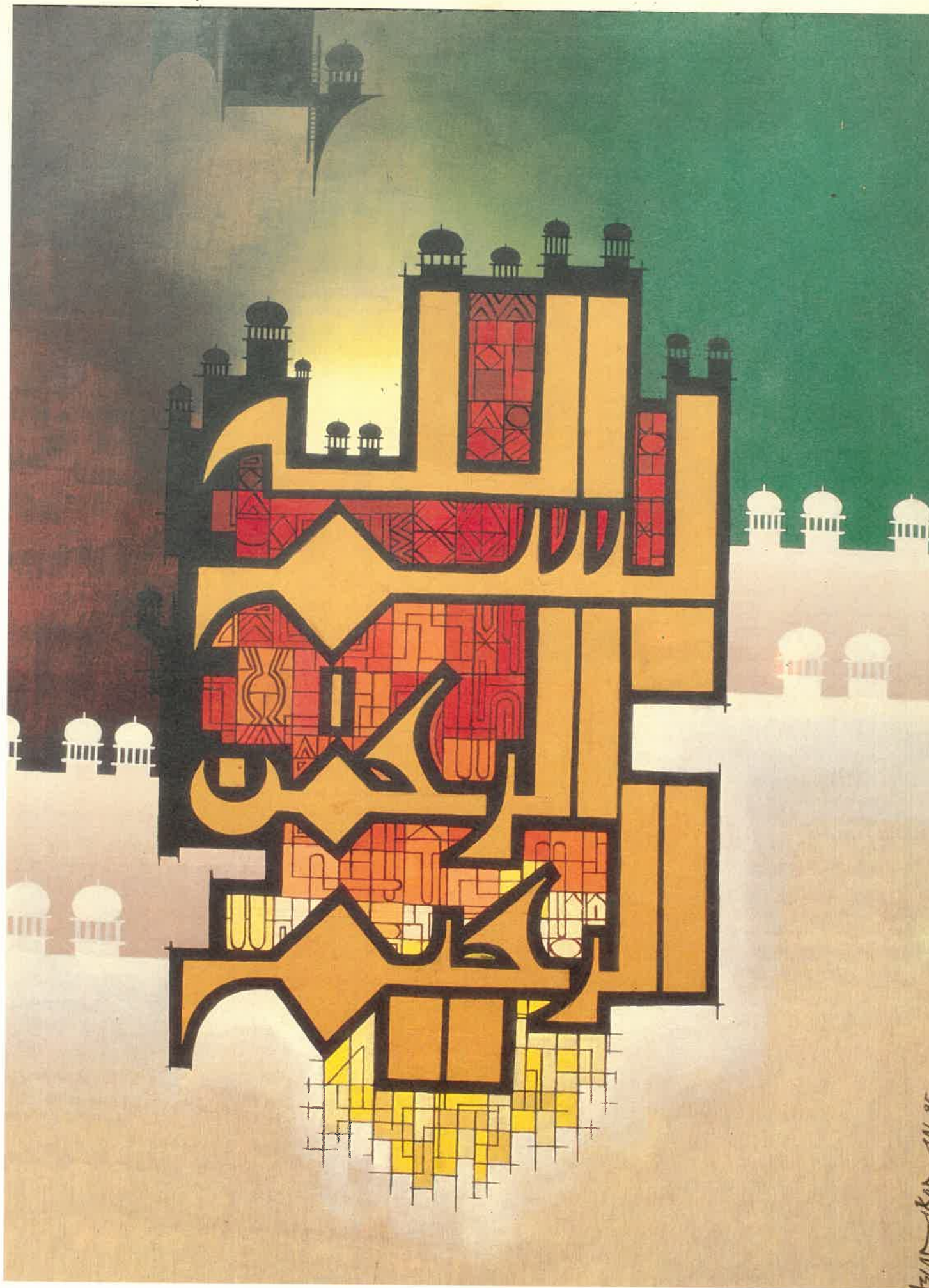
Seraj Munir
Director, Institute of Islamic Culture, Pakistan

Aslam Kamal's powerful imagery and unique approach will add a new page to Islamic Art of painting.

Al-Amba Kuwait
6 May 1978

Aslam Kamal is able to combine the simple but powerful geometric shape of the Arabic letters with subtle constructions and it enhances the beauty of the design that every where the heritage of Moghul India, and that means here the architectural heritage of the city of Lahore, becomes visible in the delightful allusions to minarets and domes as they are so typical of Lahore, Delhi, and Agra. As Aslam Kamal concentrates on the religious heritage of his country, the combination of the words of the Holy Quran, or of blessings for the Prophet with the element of Mosque architecture seems, to me, particularly successful and meaningful. Among those who have turned to calligraphic painting in the Islamic world, I would rank Aslam Kamal very high, for he displays a unique combination of form, meaning and sense of colour, alongwith an apparently inexhaustible inventiveness and a deep respect for the message of the sacred words he is writing.

Prof. Dr. Anne Marie Schimmel
Harvard University





Muhammad Haneef Ramay

- 1931 Born March 1 at Sheikhpura
- 1952 One-man show at Fine Arts Department, University of Punjab
- 1954-72 Edited Urdu weeklies 'Sawera' and "Nusrat" and daily "Musawat"
- 1970 to date Took part in politics. Elected Member of Punjab Assembly and Senator. Became Finance Minister and then Chief Minister of Punjab.
During same period held one-man shows at Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad.





QUEST FOR UNVEILING THE MEANING OF WORD

Mohammad Haneef Ramay embarked on his career as an artist in early Fifties as a modernist who was thoroughly entrenched in the tradition of the sub-continent. His use of lines and colours, shapes and forms blended in his themes with perfect harmony. He was not formally educated in painting except for working under the guidance of Ustad Allah Bukhsh — a master of realistic-traditional-romantic school. Even at that time, his use of line especially curves, indicated his fascination for Arabic and Persian scripts. In his quest for truth, he drew inspiration from the Holy Quran, and trained himself in traditional calligraphy under the tutelage of Mohammad Hussain Shah, one of the few great masters in the art.

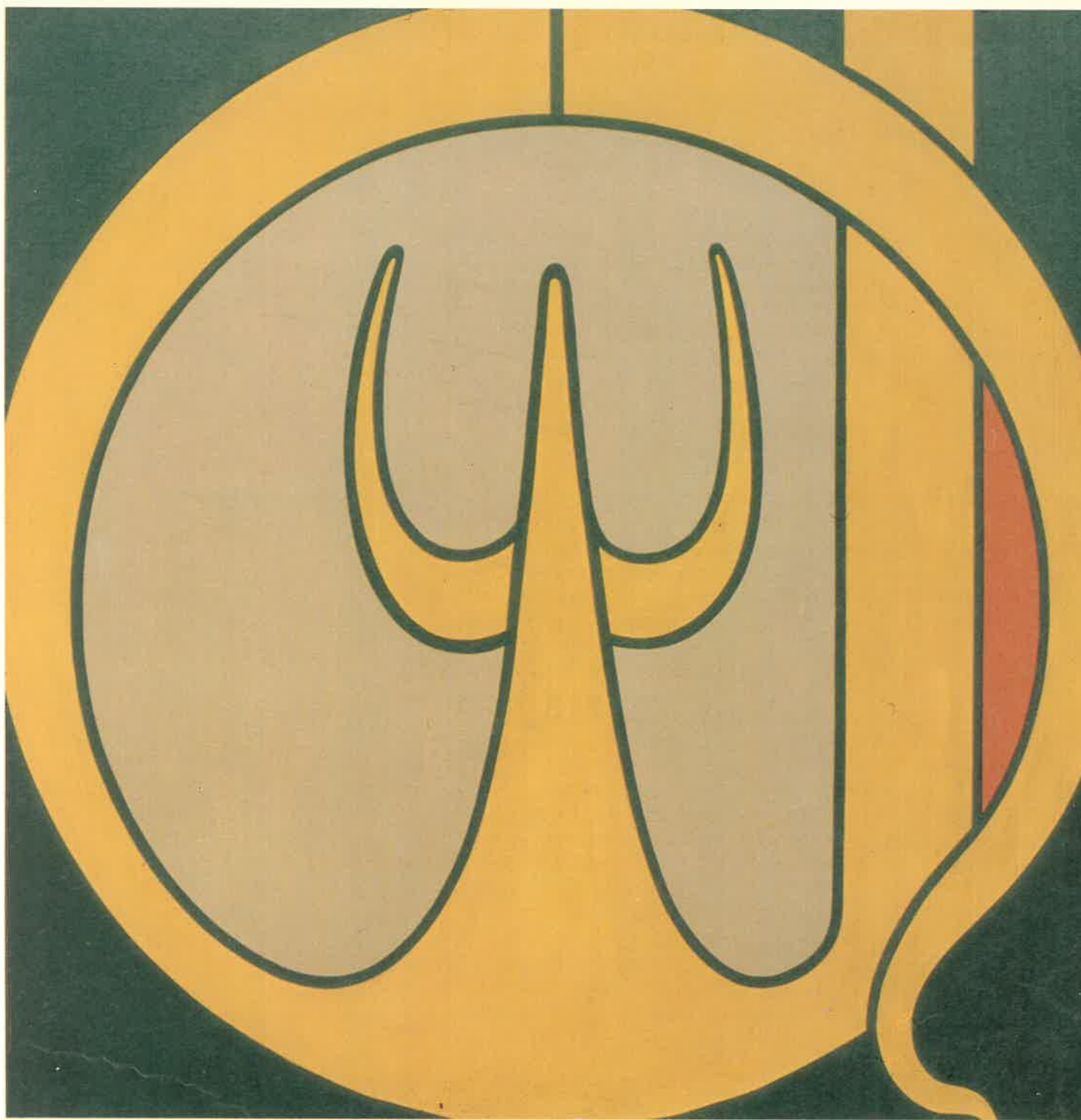
MYSTERY OF THE WORLD

Confident of his understanding of the forms and shapes of the written word and tuning himself to the vibrations set forth by the phonetics of the spoken word, he desired to unveil the mysteries and meanings enshrouded in the lines through the powerful medium of colour. Having gained control over his technique and concepts, he began to explore, discover and ultimately initiate a new dimension in the art of painting, and calligraphic painting. Very intelligently and successfully, he integrated the art of calligraphy and the art of painting by giving "the language of colour to the lines of the written word". Thus utilising his acute sense of design, he skilfully interprets the word through reorganised lines and colour corresponding to the mood and meaning of the word. Forms merge into patterns in such a way that the entire piece of work scintillates even with the echoes of the sound waves set off by the word for the initiated, vibrating the entire being with feelings.

In Haneef Ramay's earlier calligraphic paintings, there seems to be a conscious effort to stimulate emotions through a word that inspires him. Utilization of space, mass juxtapositions and arrangements were of secondary nature and importance. The stress was on liberating the feeling locked in the lines and employing colours for releasing and elaborating meaning.

ALLAH
36" x 36", Oil, 1980

AL-MUSAWAR
36" x 36", Oil, 1983



His colours were bright and burning with passion, reminiscent of his peasant past; greens, yellows and reds of the fields and "warm" and cold hues of blue from his native summer and winter skies. Lines — straight, meeting at angles, departing and then dissolving into curves and curls giving the words a definite mass accentuated by his passionate and deft use of palette make the images to appear three-dimensional. His "Isme-Mohammad" is a classical example of this "Passion" period.

MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

In his later, rather the latest period (solo exhibition November, 1985) after about two decades of hibernation, he has applied all his knowledge, experience and craft to create two-dimensional canvases, a departure from his early period. He has, with his peculiar control over line, manipulated it into highly disciplined patterns, words mould the entire surface into a simplified and yet paradoxically a highly complex unit which becomes self-explanatory. Colours, however glowing, are now flat. Palette that was once almost pure, has now become more involved in creating strange, mysterious colours glowing with hues, tonal variations that now clash, now harmonise. Importance of geometrical format, graphic design and harmonious use of line is apparent. His latest work creates rhythm that tends to reflect the "music of the spheres", pulsating with the truth, the ultimate. And this could be possible for him only through the sacred words of the Holy Quran:

"— My work is neither an exercise in writing words in a pleasing manner nor is it an instrument to appease the clergy. My work is a medium through which I establish my relationship with God on one hand and an affirmation of my contact with life on the other. Undoubtedly my work (calligraphic-painting) will be judged by the strict standards required to judge any painting. But like all other arts, a painting is not merely a sensory experience. It is a fact that a piece of music is food not only for the ear, it also strums the chords of the human soul. Likewise a painting is not merely a feast for the eye, it can also stimulate the soul of its viewer to reach out and free itself from the rubble of sentimentalism, prejudice and dogma —"

Who could be more lucid about his art and commitment than Haneef Ramay himself.

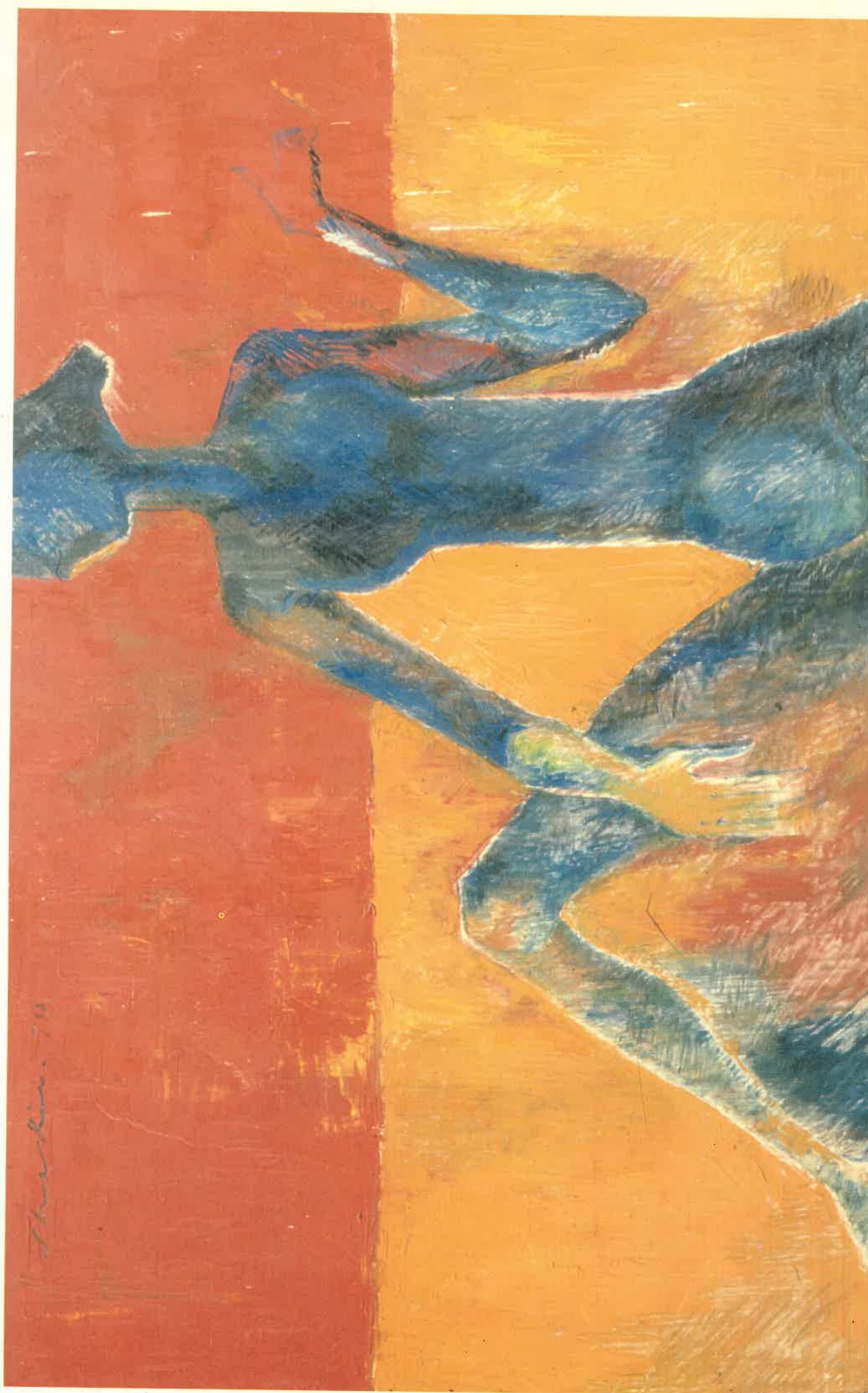
Dr. Enver Sajjad





Shaker Ali

- 1916 Born in Rampur, India
- 1938–44 Studied art at the J.J. School of Art, Bombay
- 1945 Did post-diploma studies in mural decoration under Charles Gerrard.
- 1946–49 Went to the Slade School of Arts, London for a Diploma in Fine Arts.
Worked with Andre L'Hote in South France. Came under the influence of Cubism and other modern art movements.
- 1950–51 Studied Industrial Design in the Charles University Prague, Czechoslovakia.
- 1952 Joined the teaching staff of the National College of Art, Lahore.
- 1961 Appointed as Principal National College of the Arts, Lahore.
- 1962 Awarded President's Medal for Pride of Performance.
- 1971 Awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz
- Jan. 27, 1975 Died in Mayo Hospital, Lahore.



THE LEADER OF MODERNISM IN PAKISTANI ART

It was the turning point the year 1951, when Shakir Ali arrived in Karachi. The Art world in Pakistan soon after Independence in 1947 and after going through the traumatic experience of the unprecedented holocaust, found itself trapped in the throes of rebirth. Despite an eerie silence that prevailed, the sparks of rebellion were discernable. The old legacies of traditional art forms and cliché-ridden formats had not given up their ground, ignoring the changing contemporary context, refusing to accept the impact of human miseries so visibly scattered around them. That was the perspective when Shakir Ali reached Lahore, the nerve centre of artistic activities. He managed to induce climate, created a temperament and indicated a direction. He came to cause a stir, stimulate a new urge, to find strength in the renewal of the newly-found energies. He initiated a period of experimentation, innovation and discovery. He became the high-priest of all those restless artists who were desperately searching for a new vocabulary for their expression. Shakir became an ignition point through which exploded the nucleus of creativity in Pakistan. In a way, he launched a movement and became the symbol of a sureness and an awareness of the time which hitherto was missing.

Shakir was enchanted with Rilke, the great German poet and was engrossed in the works of Fucik, a Czech writer of subtle brilliance. He straightaway borrowed Fucik's symbols as his own; the birds, flowers and the sun. All these 'subjects' which were as much Eastern in sensibility as they are Western in symbolism, adorned his canvases till his last. He could recite Rilke stanza after stanza and would go on, in his own way, explaining the layers of meaning which made Rilke's poetry as rich and expressive. Perhaps the monk in Rilke suited Shakir, for he was very much a simple man, rather shy, withdrawn, meditative and brooding.

MYSTICAL SYMBOLS

Shakir Ali not only transposed the poetic imagery of Rilke into his own phrase but also gave it a new reference in terms of contemporary thought. His symbols tended to be mystical and of devotional quality, sparking off a wealth of associations all the time. Thus, his attempt to



rearrange the forms and spatial proportions without bringing the slightest touch of sentimentality has appropriately been described by Prof. M.H. Askari as a "struggle of an artist to express himself through a medium, and the struggle of a medium to express itself through an artist."

Accuracy is not the answer as Delacroix remarked. Hence Shakir's distortions are to be seen as extension of expressive possibilities. In fact, they express the intellectual sophistication and emotional authenticity. His paintings do not cover up the problems by way of niceness. Instead they confront the viewer with a multitude of visual reasons.

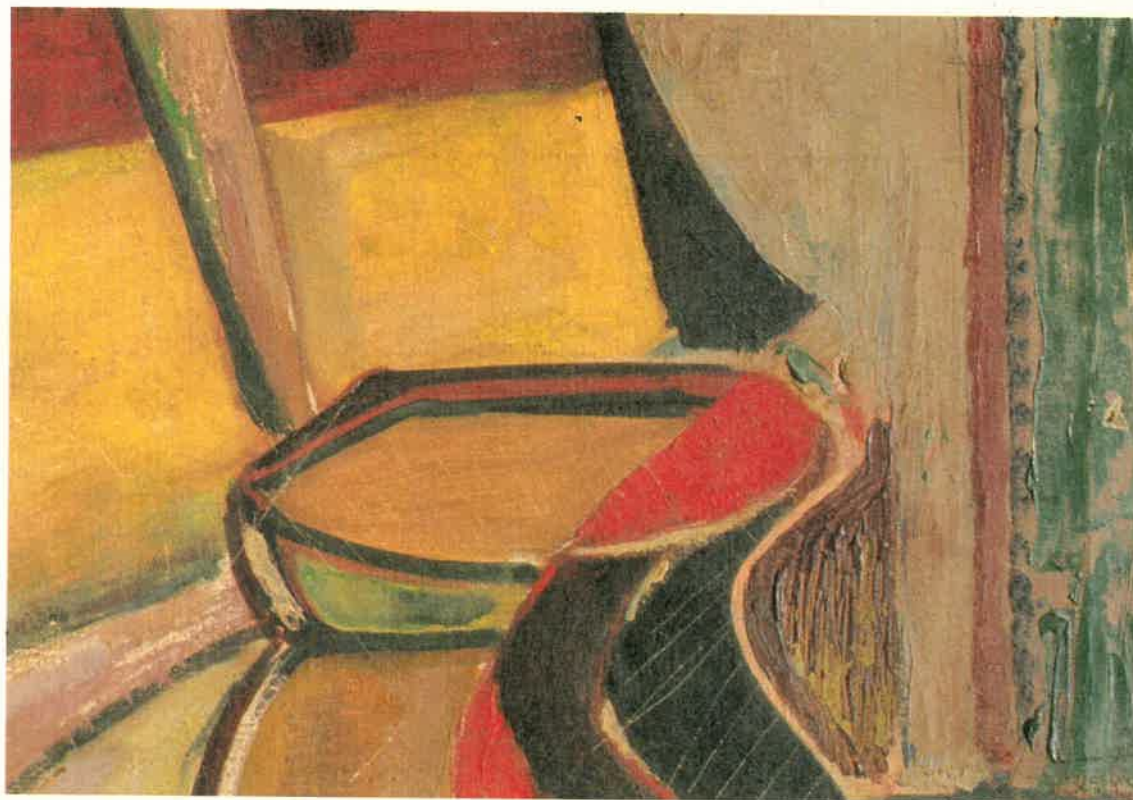
Another art critic Mr. Nasir Shamsi observes that in his paintings "there are no fire-works, no bursts of colours, no showmanship of craft, no playing to the gallery in the choice of subject matter." His work is artistically fluent and sincere. This was perhaps, due to the influence of Mr. Charles Gerrard the Principal of J.J. School of Arts, Bombay, who was a great exponent of post-impressionistic style.

Here again the coincidence is interesting. Chughtai shunned publicity and kept himself aloof, avoiding company. Even his figures on the canvas do not communicate with each other. Shakir too was company shy. He lost his mother when he was still young and his two marriages ending in tragic separation, forced him to withdraw into his shell. Thus he found solace in the "soliloquy of his paintings". He was a solitary voyager of sad intensity.

CZECH INFLUENCE

While Shakir Ali was in Czechoslovakia, Fucik's book "Report from the Gallows" and the tragic fate of the town Lidice, completely destroyed by Nazis during the war, moved him deeply, engraving an indelible impression on his sensitive mind. Shakir Ali found Fucik's work "overflowing with a love of life and freedom: its author, even in his most difficult moments when sentenced to death was able to write about the sun, flowers and the birds". And these are the motifs which have been brought to life in his work.

Shakir Ali once observed "Each one of us is born with a bird, free, unfettered, reaching out for the infinite. But owing to the prejudices of our civilisation, restrictions of our families and superimpositions of



conventions, that bird is caged and loses its notes of freedom. I am trying to find that bird in me. And if I do, I will pass it on. That bird will go from me to you? This may not be the whole truth but these few sentences express the spirit of his work in its essence. Colours like images, besides performing a plastic function are also imbued with symbolic overtones. This use of symbols is rarely employed as a purely descriptive device to express thought process. Mostly they are evolved through the medium and charged with multiplicity of associations, expressive at various levels of individual experiences.

FREEDOM OF INDIVIDUAL

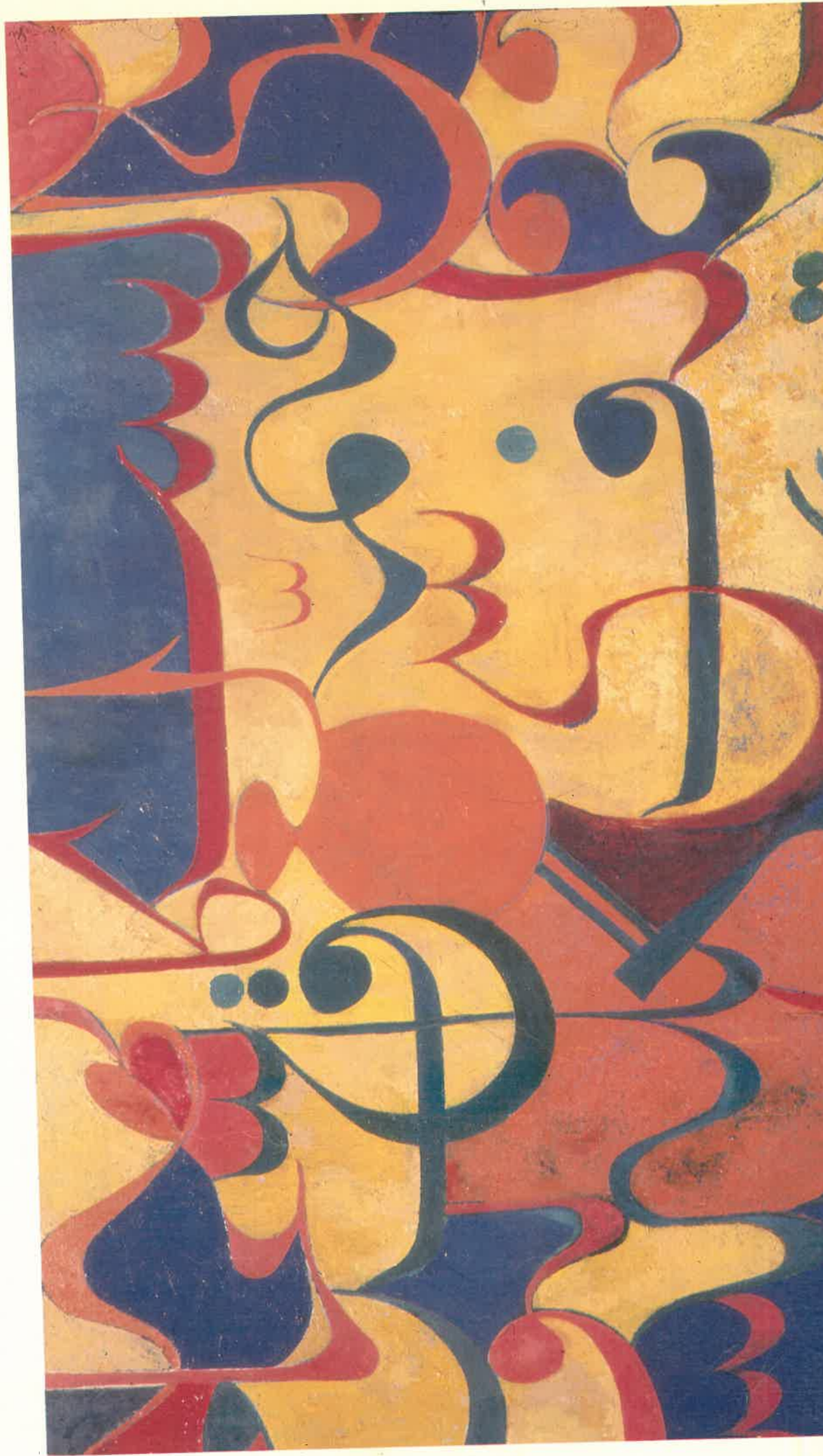
In a way, Shakir's symbolic portrayal of animals, birds, flowers and leaves is a protest against injustices, exploitations and wars, affirming freedom of an individual against restraints and cruelty. In some periods of his work, he emerges as a subtle but alive image maker of social protest for the betterment of society.

Shakir Ali executed some extremely satisfying and convincing murals based on different themes and subjects. His mural entitled "Pastoral" is a significant statement expressing hope and optimism and his mural "Flight" (acquired by Czech Government) with outstretched wings of the birds, presents a delicate theme of freedom and strength. His murals based on calligraphy also deserve special mention here. The mural which he created for the Punjab Public Library, has a Gothic richness about it. Decorative elements from nature, delicate texture and flowery word and colour are interwoven with calligraphic forms to create a rich sumptuous effect.

The other mural which is also based on calligraphic forms, commissioned by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Centre has been conceived in terms of illuminated pages from an ancient manuscript. But the whole is conceived on a monumental scale, consequently the effect is aesthetically overwhelming.

The contribution of Shakir Ali as a teacher and later as a Principal of the National College of Arts (Originally Mayo School of Art), Lahore must also be highlighted for it was from here that he could organise and inspire a team of dedicated teachers and devoted students who became the active participants of an art movement in Pakistan which has not yet, despite four decades, lost its sheen. That is not a mean achievement.

Hameed Zaman



CALLIGRAPHY
of Calligraphy
ms., Oil, 1969

OPINION

Shakir Ali is one of our most significant and uncompromising artists.

Safdar Mir

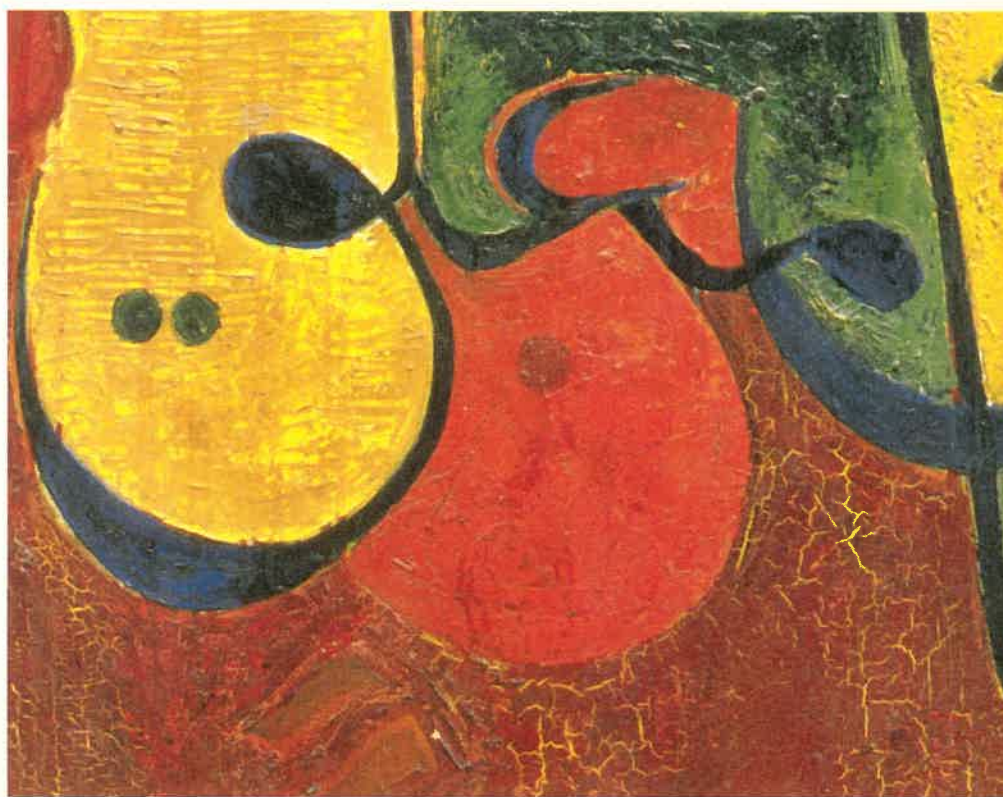
In crafting his paintings, Shakir Ali was not merely concerned with painting a nude, a bird, a flower, a bull, a still life, or, in the act of calligraphic writing, but his main concern was the search of a personal creative identity which can be truly established in the works of an artist. In the process of resolving the problem of his perception and craft, the artist also unconsciously helps in the emergence of the image of a new consciousness which he calls his identity. Shakir Ali's identity as a creative being is related to his works in this sense. His art in the final analysis is the art of affirmation of the basic human values, which makes us feel that life is eternal. This is the measure of the artist and it is a matter of pride that in Shakir Ali we had the man who achieved it.

Ali Imam

Once aspiring to be a dancer, Shakir retained a delight in the range of creative expression from the primitive to the decadent. His last works were in fact the culmination of the striving towards the essence that he spoke about so often, where form, colour and content fuse into a simple lyrical statement. Shakir will perhaps be ultimately assessed as the painter who delineated possibilities rather than having been there.

Salima Hashmi

Asstt. Prof. National College
of the Arts, Lahore.



OPINION

Nevertheless, Shakir instilled in his students and colleagues at the NCA, an appreciation for art history and its practical application in other fields of art. When his art matured in the mid-sixties, Shakir Ali realized a highly personal, technically accomplished genre that merited the recognition it received. He had outgrown Cubism and created imagery that drew from world art history, local culture, and personal experiences. His last paintings were minimalist, emphasizing the relationship of the object with its special environment. Shakir's paintings and his philosophy influenced a generation of Lahore painters, few of whom will be able to boast of an original contribution equal to his.

Dr. Marcella C. Nesom

To appreciate the influence of the late Shakir Ali on the Pakistan art scene, one should try to visualize the development of painting in this country without him. Possibly artists would still be trapped in modes of illustrative realism reminiscent of student work in Western art academies.

However, when Shakir Ali arrived in the Fifties to make his home in Pakistan, he brought a breath of fresh air — from the West where he had trained and worked. He carried with himself the processes of modern abstract art, a style that liberated the artist from any compulsion to imitate nature. It opened endless doors for those concerned with visual experience, with colour, form and design, to take from nature and surrounding artifacts but re-make images in ever new juxtapositions.

Some of Shakir Ali's canvases of the Sixties display a highly mature, sophisticated employment of the oil medium, exhibiting a richness rarely found in Pakistani art shows. His human and zoomorphic forms and still lives are uncluttered, spatial and contemplative.

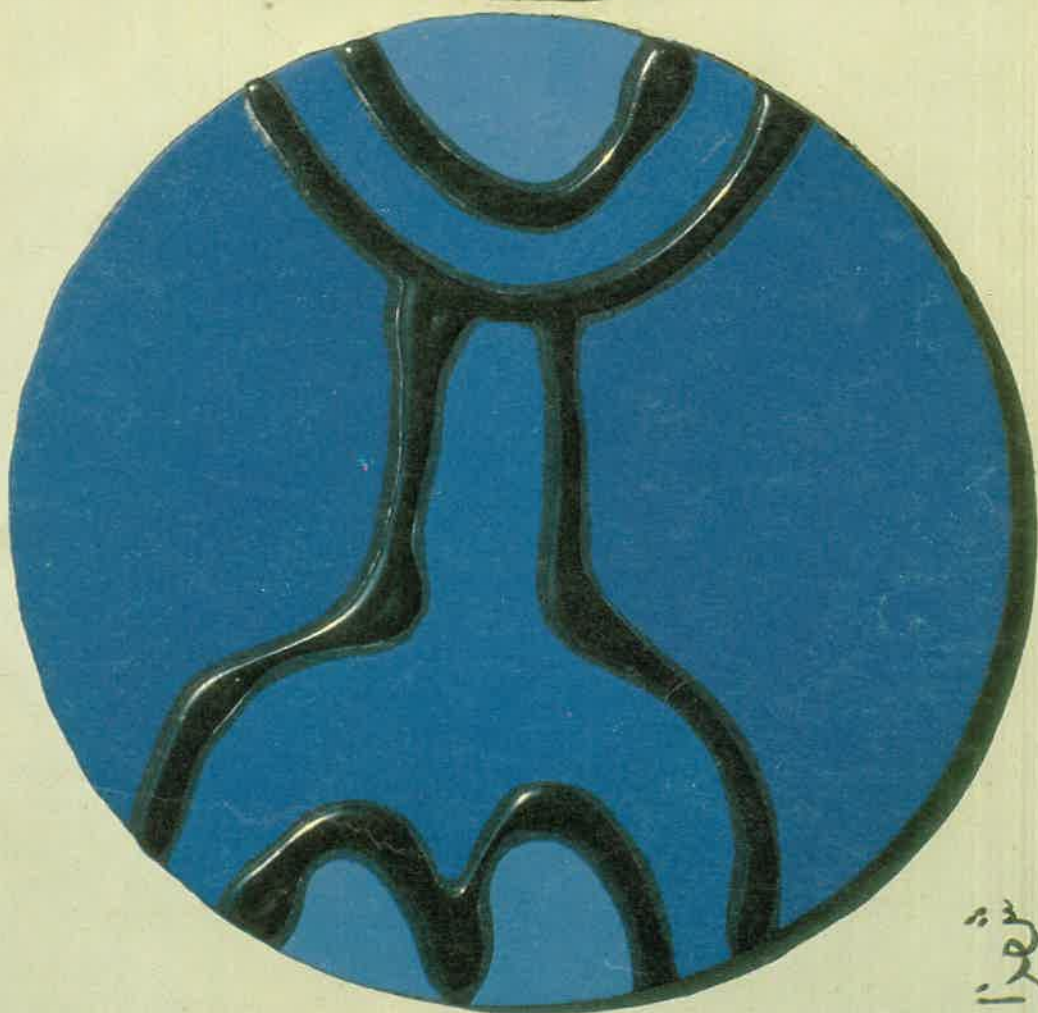
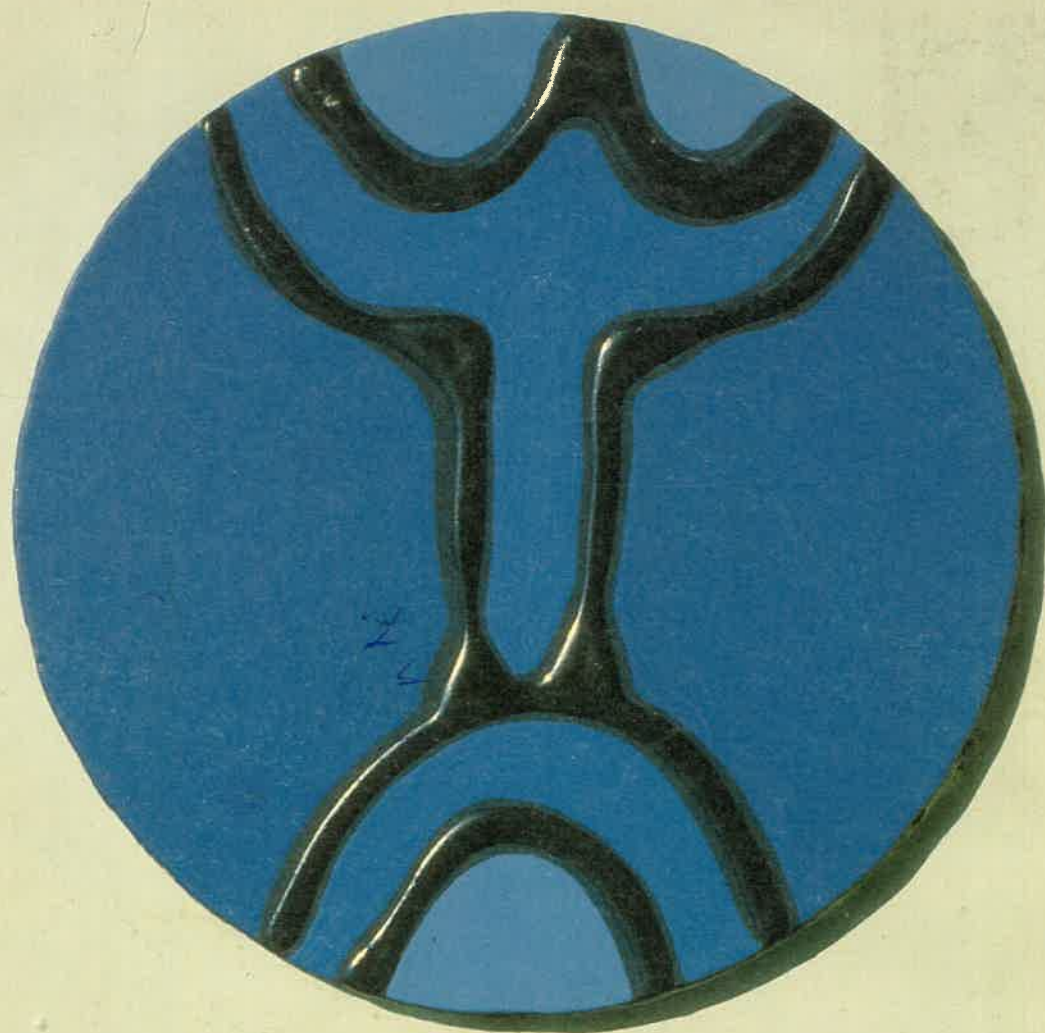
Mariam Habib





Anwar Jalal Shemza

- 1928 Born at Simla
- 1947 Received the Diploma of the Mayo School of Art.
- 1959 Awarded University College Diploma, Slade School, London.
- 1960 Post-graduate Research work in Graphic Arts, Slade School, London
- 1971-72 Research work into the visual response of a black child in a white society; Birmingham School of Art Education.
- 1953-85 Held several exhibitions at all major art centres in the world. Lived and taught in Stafford, England.
- 1985 Died in England.



二

AN ARTIST YEARNING FOR ROOTS

By leaving his native country to enter a larger world of art and ideas, an artist is subjected to a two-fold test. His work must meet international aesthetic standards without his personality becoming submerged in a sterile cosmopolitanism. Shemza's life work successfully demonstrates eclecticism without loss of individuality.

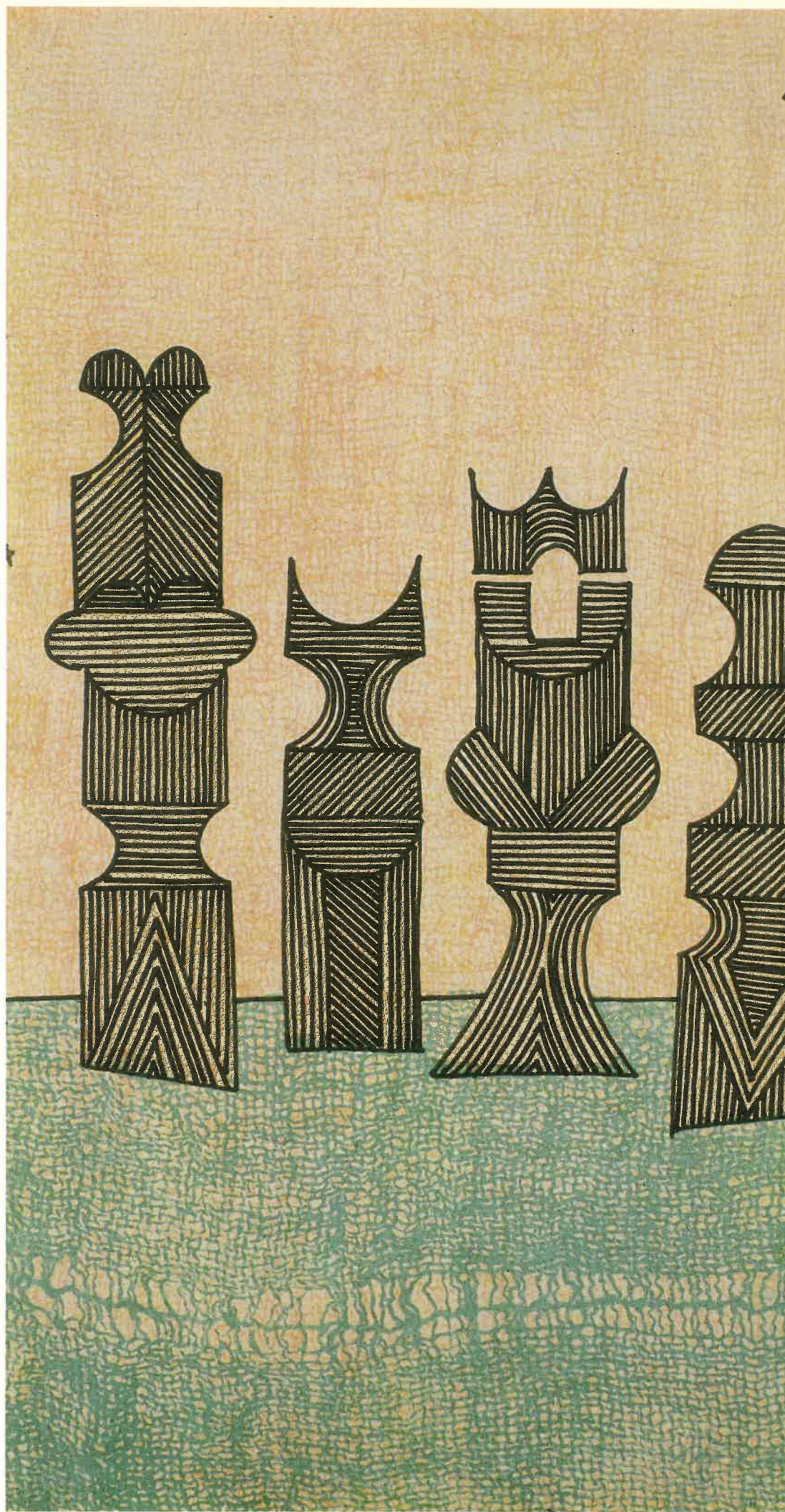
Pakistani artist Anwar Jamal Shemza was born into a Kashmiri Muslim family at Simla, India in 1928, but his artistic career started in Lahore with the birth of Pakistan in 1947, when he received the Diploma of the Mayo School of Art. The development of his highly personal style in painting is intertwined with the events of his life and his decision to make his home in Stafford, England. It was here that he taught and painted for twenty-four years, with his wife Mary, also an artist and teacher.

A thorough grounding in his craft at Lahore and at the Slade School of Art, London, gave Shemza exposure to both the Eastern miniature techniques and the Western idiom. His vision encompassed both languages, he was able to express himself as a modern painter without abandoning the iconograph, the images, the rich reservoir of the Islamic visual heritage as manifested in architecture, calligraphy, painting, carpets and textiles. As a young man Shemza's involvement with poetry and literature preceded his vocation as a painter, providing a richer base from which his imagination would create the sensitive patterns that flowed from the hand of a skilled draftsman.

The writer visited his Stafford home a few months before his sudden death in January 1985. Shemza pointed towards a small painted picture on his living room wall which showed a flat circle above a square. This is what I have been working on as the base of my art, he said. The two shapes absorbed him since his student days, they can be traced in his multifarious compositions.

LINEAR SHAPES

Swiss painter Paul Klee made use of Islamic calligraphic shapes and child-like drawings. Critics have seen parallels in Shemza's creations, although the latter derived these forms from his own cultural experience. His art



embodies many elements, the sinuous two-dimensional rhythmic line, subtle oriental colour juxtapositions and harmonies, textural contrasts and recessions. He did not shade forms, the sensation of depth being achieved through thoughtful intuitive use of line and tone.

His method was to develop a selected theme through many variations. In the manner of Klee he took a line for a walk, the quality of his art exhibits a strong involvement with linear shapes. In his own words, "My work is based on the simplification of three-dimensional, solid, architectural reality and on the decorative elements of calligraphy".

Shemza exhibited from 1953 onwards in group and one-man shows in Pakistan, the U.K., Europe, and in two international biennials. His work has been purchased by galleries in Pakistan, Austria and England and private collectors in numerous countries.

ROOTS

His last posthumous show toured Pakistan in late 1985. Entitled Roots, it was composed of more than a hundred and fifty selected works painted during the period 1977-1984. Of extreme sensitivity and subtlety, the small paintings express the artist's yearning for his origins, his roots. The roots theme is treated pictorially in numerous variants, the lower band symbolizing roots which take on the curves of Arabic calligraphy, these connect with living plant forms above that seem to grow and move. The frayed edges of the material on which the design is painted, add another visual and textural dimension. The more happily realized compositions display a marvellously subtle blending of reason and emotion, of Islamic and modern.

Fine line and pen work over a printed cheese-cloth effect produce a detailed universe of delightful minuteness, within a carefully composed overall scheme. Such work is more intimate, in the mood of a miniature without the illustrative content of a traditional miniature. Indeed Shemza's work is for contemplation; it invites the viewer to enter a mood of gentle lines and colour; it evokes a subjective response from which aesthetic pleasure is never absent.

MARIAM HABIB



OPINION

Shemza's sketch books show very clearly his primary interest-obsession almost, — with linear, rhythmically orchestrated and serially developed two dimensional shapes, stored in the head, and brought out in the very act of drawing rather than developed from observation.

Peter Burnhill Mary
Kalrina 1985

Shemza's problem as a modern artist in Pakistan — a Muslim state — was to formulate a style consistent with Islamic principles. These principles have always favoured the logical, abstract, and austere and except where the national temperament has been at variance — as in Persian or Moghul India — they have led to an art the reverse of the sensuous or humanistic. Such an attitude might be defined as serenity, lucid composure and it is possibly on this account that A.J. Shemza's pictures seem especially appropriate to Pakistan.

W.G. Archer

Artists from the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent have in fact been faced with a double problem, to discover their own tradition as well as that of the West. Shemza is one of the exceptional instances of an artist prepared to take up the challenge.

Andrew Forge

There is no other Pakistani painter whose work is so thoroughly love-drenched and conspicuously devoted to the native land as seen in Shemza's work... If anyone deserved a national award, it was Shemza.

A.R. Nagori

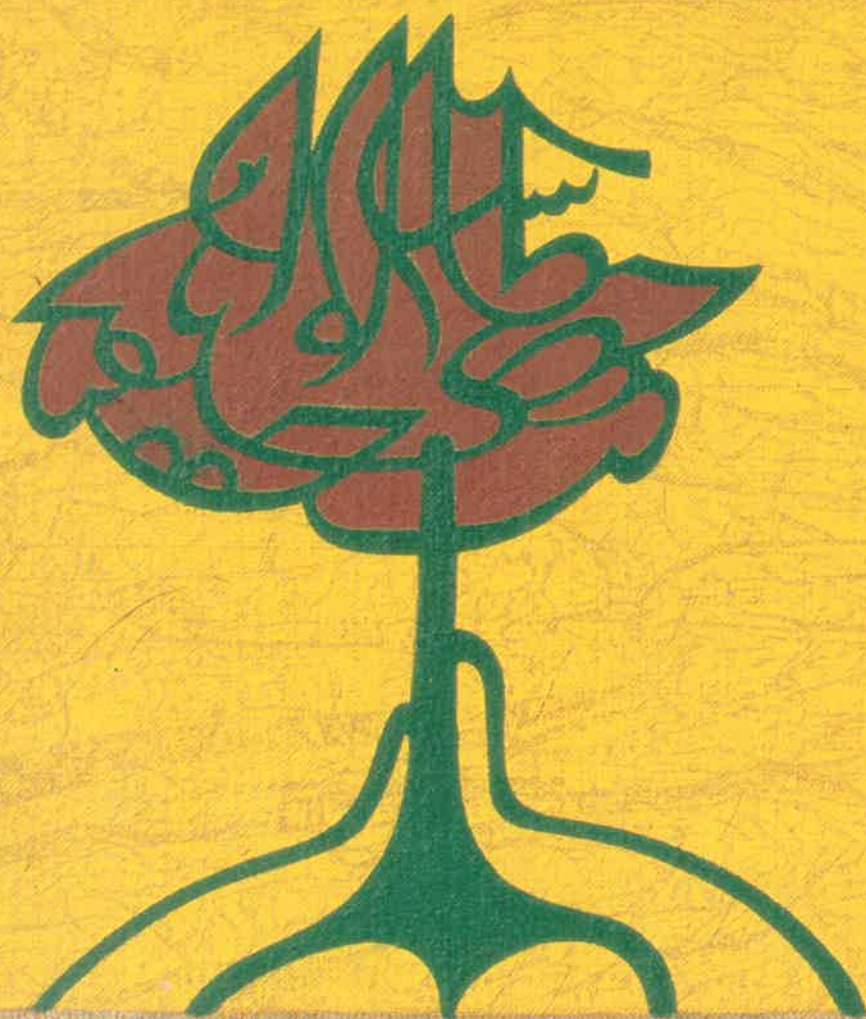
One of the main clues to his art, using the theory of archetypes, emerges after considering the fact that the Mohammedan designer for many thousands of years used the Vedantic mathematical system, the grid system to express complex visual ideas about the universe, and that the abundant surface decoration seen in Islamic architecture, textiles and illustrated books served a much more sophisticated purpose as recent analyses would suggest, in postulating a mathematical equivalent of the creative processes.

John Thompeon

His philosophical attitude is best summed up in one of his titles. One circle, one square, one problem, one life is not enough to solve it.

Mr. Kitchin

شعرا
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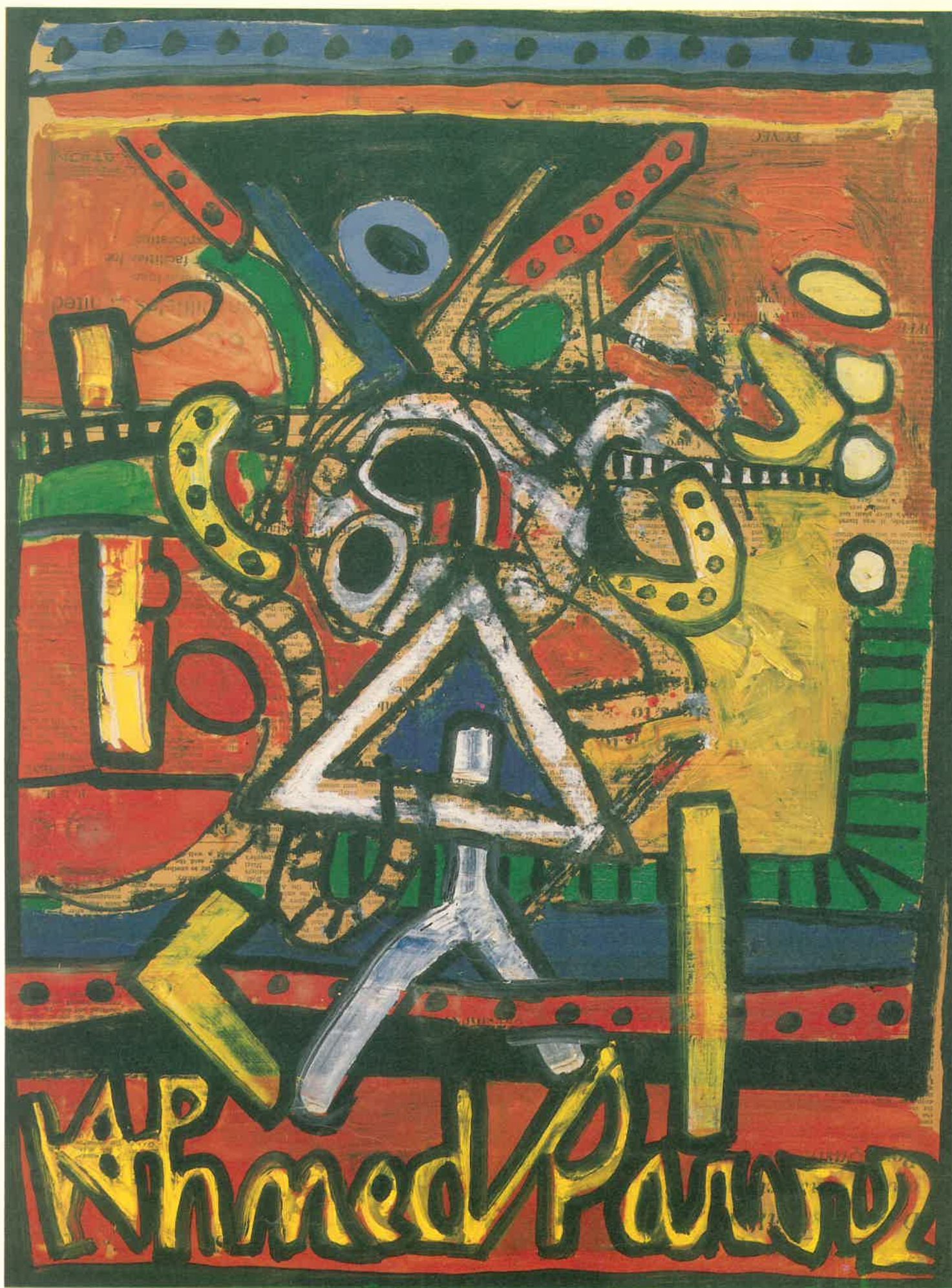




Ahmed Pervaz

- 1926 Born at Rawalpindi
- 1952 First exhibited at the Department of Arts and Crafts, University of the Punjab and won the highest award.
- 1955–64 Worked and exhibited in Britain
- 1964–67 Returned to Pakistan, set up a studio and exhibited in Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi.
- 1967–70 Lived and worked in New York, USA
- 1973 Awarded the first prize in the National Exhibition organised by the Pakistan National Council of the Arts, Islamabad.
Held one-man exhibitions at Murree, Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi and Islamabad, London and various cities of the USA.
Exhibited with other painters at Sao Paulo, London, Antwerp, Belgium, Holland, America and a travelling exhibition of Pakistan painters which toured 22 countries.
- 1978 Awarded the President's Medal for Pride of Performance.
- 1979 Died on 5th October, in Karachi.





THE TRAIL BLAZER

In the body of work that one can term Pakistani painting, there stands out from the mainstream, the restless, vibrant work of Ahmed Pervez, defying labels and denying convenient links with tradition.

Originally one of the Lahore group of painters of the early Fifties, Pervez was entirely self-taught. Known even then for his iconoclastic approach to painting, his early paintings owed a little to cubism and critics drew attention to influences from Matisse and Picasso. This phase was, however, short-lived and his painting moved quickly towards the non-figurative.

He left for London in 1955, where his first few years were hard-going. His first exhibition, in 1959, was at the New Vision Centre Gallery and consisted entirely of water colours, small in size, linear and delicate in form. His colours were lyrical and imagery reminiscent of the miniatures from the sub-continent. There was by now a definite coherence in his work, an ability to articulate strongly-felt emotions in visual terms. This first exhibition was followed by four one-man shows at the Lincoln Gallery in 1961 and 1962. He also exhibited in a large number of group shows including the inaugural show of the Commonwealth Institute Art Gallery, where he represented Pakistan among painters of 22 other countries. Other major galleries which showed his works during his years in England included the Redfern Gallery, the Clement Stephens Gallery, the Royal Institute Gallery in London, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester and Queen's University in Belfast.

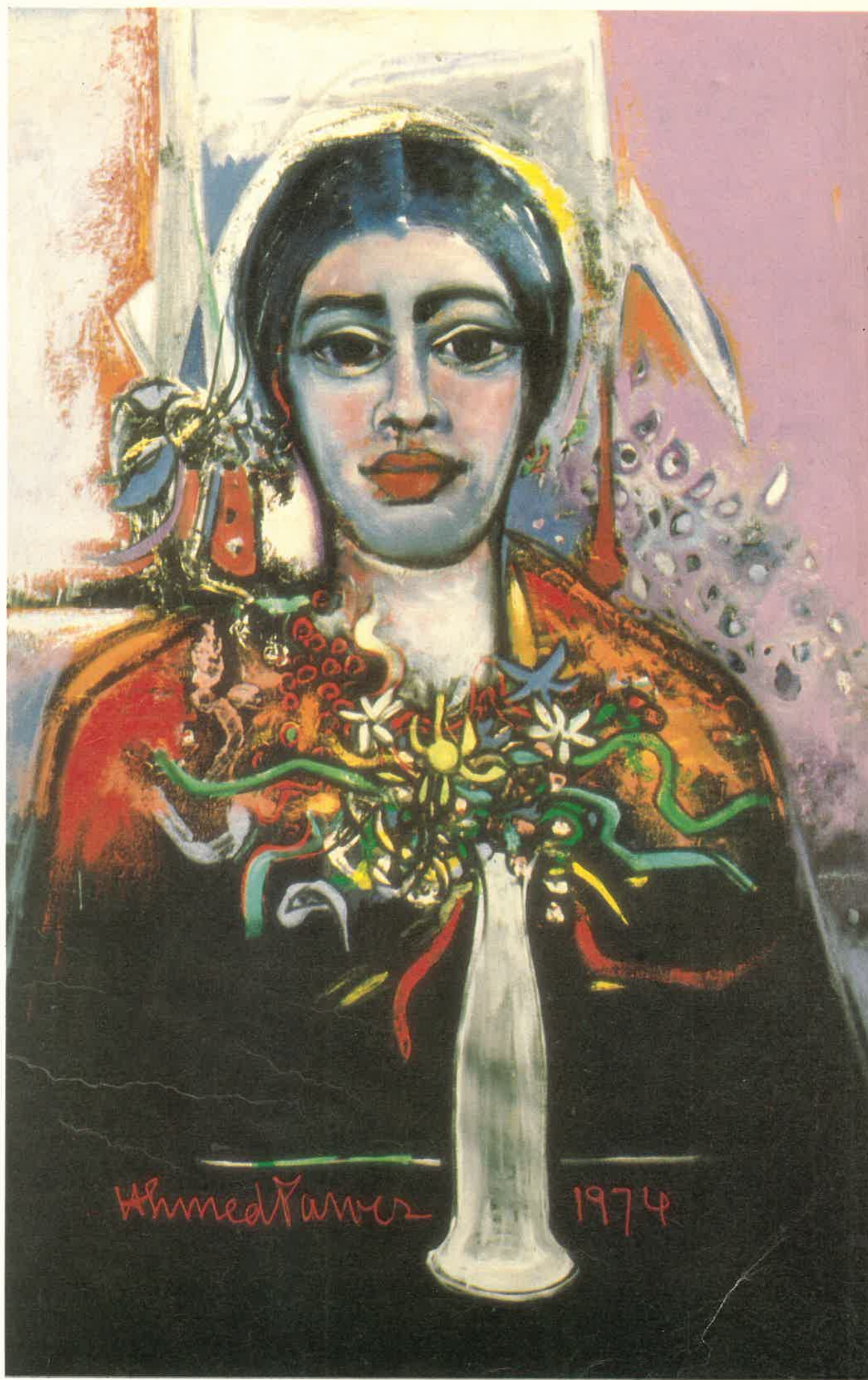
RESTLESS ENERGY

This was a prolific period, and his output was prodigious. His work sold well and there was distinguished critical acclaim. The 'Times' said of him, "Mr. Pervez, without the legacy of naturalism boldly pursues a non-figurative course, another aspect perhaps of an Eastern tradition, but more highly charged with the restless energy of modern art..." Victor Musgrave commented, "He is without question, the outstanding artist from Pakistan who has made a very strong impact upon the English world".

This was also a time for travel for Pervez; he exhibited in Holland in 1960, at the Hague, Dordrecht, Nijmegen and Leyden and in De Warnade, Ghent in Belgium. His output continued to be prolific and his energy legendary.

QUEST FOR RECOGNITION

He returned to Pakistan at the end of 1964, after an absence of almost ten years. During the next three years, he set up a studio which he named "Studio Pervez" and held exhibitions in Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi. In the later 1960's, he set off again, this time for New York, where he lived and worked for three years. He had two solo shows at the Gallery International in New York and participated in several group shows. He returned to Karachi in 1970, where he lived on and off until his death in 1979. During these nine years, he worked non-stop at a pace which would be bewildering to most painters, holding over half-a-dozen exhibitions in Karachi alone. He held his last one-man show in Lahore in 1978, although he was bitter about the lack of understanding from the Press and viewers. His long overdue official recognition came in the form of the President's Medal for Pride of Performance in 1978, which sustained him for a while before his last troubled illness.



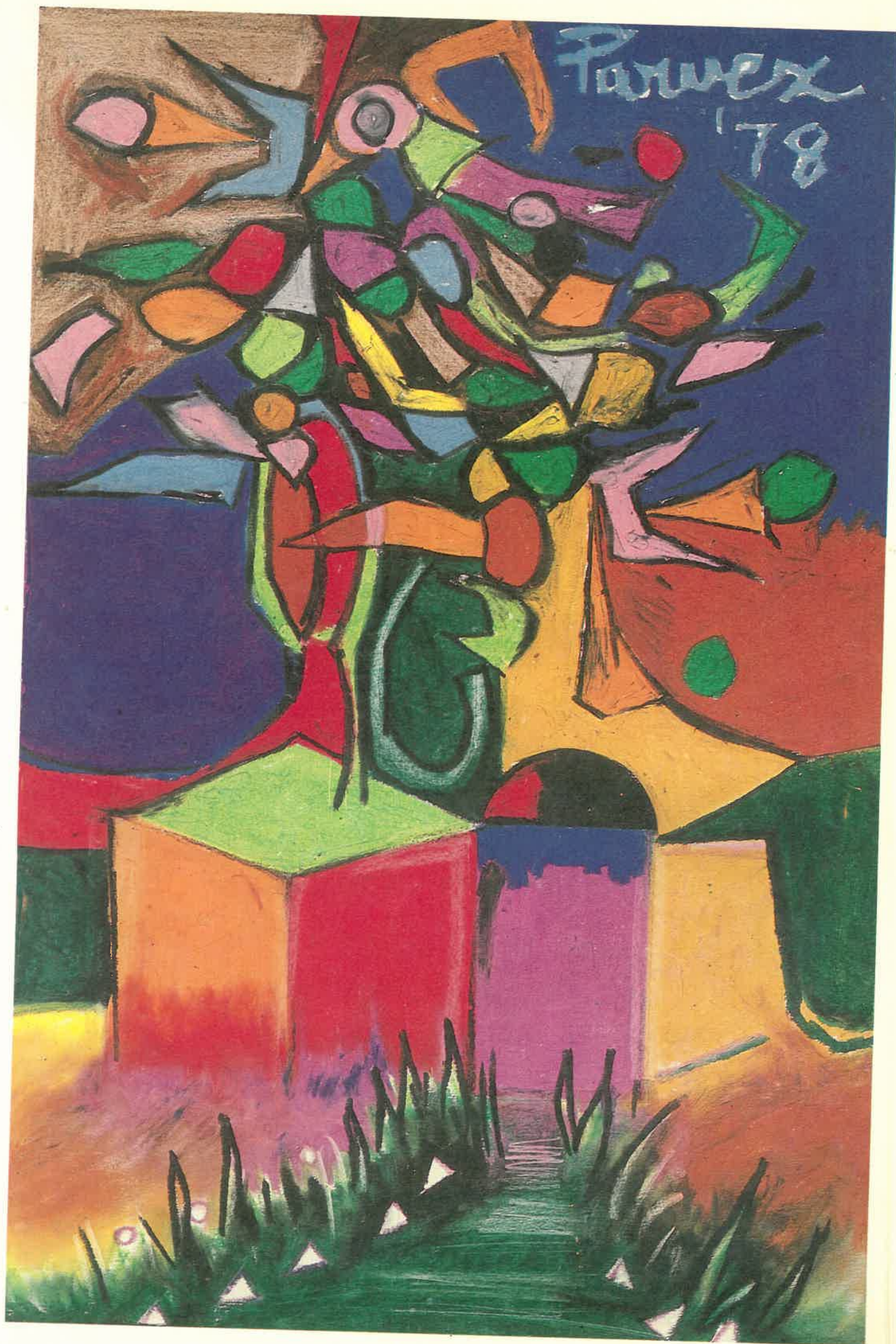
An assessment of the importance of Pervez's work in the context of Pakistan's painting is now coming about. His output in water-colours, gouache and oils is large, yet the public galleries own only a small selection of his work. After his return from London, his forms grew more frenetic, and seemed to radiate from a central pivot. These works were painted in gouache on board. The works of his later years were mainly in oils on canvas. These works of his earlier years in terms of form and colour, seem to have gained an inner repose. They live in a larger space, surrounded by a quiet sea of colour. These paintings, non-figurative as always still evoke memories of plants and flowers which pour out of the canvas, glowing, turbulent, in constant motion; the colours, rich, strong and be-jewelled.

AGITATED LIFESTYLE

Pervez's life seems to be so intertwined with the imagery in his paintings that one is constantly tempted to draw parallels. The brilliance and effervescence of colour and form were reflected in his intense, agitated lifestyle. His constant demanding of himself and of the world around him, drove him finally to the illness that took his life at the early age of 53, and yet it was just this forceful relentlessness, translated onto his canvases which created in Pakistan a new understanding of the essence of the activity which we call painting. Breaking away from both the literary and the literal, the assembling of shape, colour and form in the context of the two-dimensional, Pervez defied all comfortable visual landmarks. There are explosions of colour, defying description which are occasionally delineated to create areas of emphasis. The shapes and forms, in the constant motion, can be both decorative and menacing; there is little that is doctrinaire. Here there is no imitation or narration, instead an intensely dynamic vision, both vivid and personal.

There is no doubt that today in Pakistan, a large number of painters owe their modus operandi to the trail blazer that was Ahmed Pervez.

Salima Hashmi



OPINION

Ahmad Pervez is an outsider, a man alienated from his own culture, but who was not accepted by the West. He was always a stranger to the people of the East. In the conflict between contemporary popularity and rejection, he chose the escapist path taken by Ali Iqbal, Shamza, and much later Masood Kohari and was thus unable to strike roots in the land of the Oriental culture, especially the art tradition that is linked with mythology which has given birth to much folk art and literature, and which includes the Greco-Roman concepts of Gandhara art.

One can only say that Ahmed Pervez's alienation from oriental traditions is his individual revolt against that tradition.

Jamil Naqsh

His extension to the West of the ideals implicit in Muslim art has been an effort of unique importance.

Victor Musgrave

Pervez abandons nationalism and developing the Eastern traditions of art for which he shows a remarkable ability. His pictures are more poetic than ghazals (Urdu and Russian lyrical poetic forms), and more colourful than the rainbow coloured wings of a butterfly.

Morning News

The art of Ahmed Pervez shows that he is a Muslim artist, and like other Muslim painters the innovative element in his paintings is comparatively small. Like Muslim art the complexity of his painting reveal the greatness and grandeur of this art.

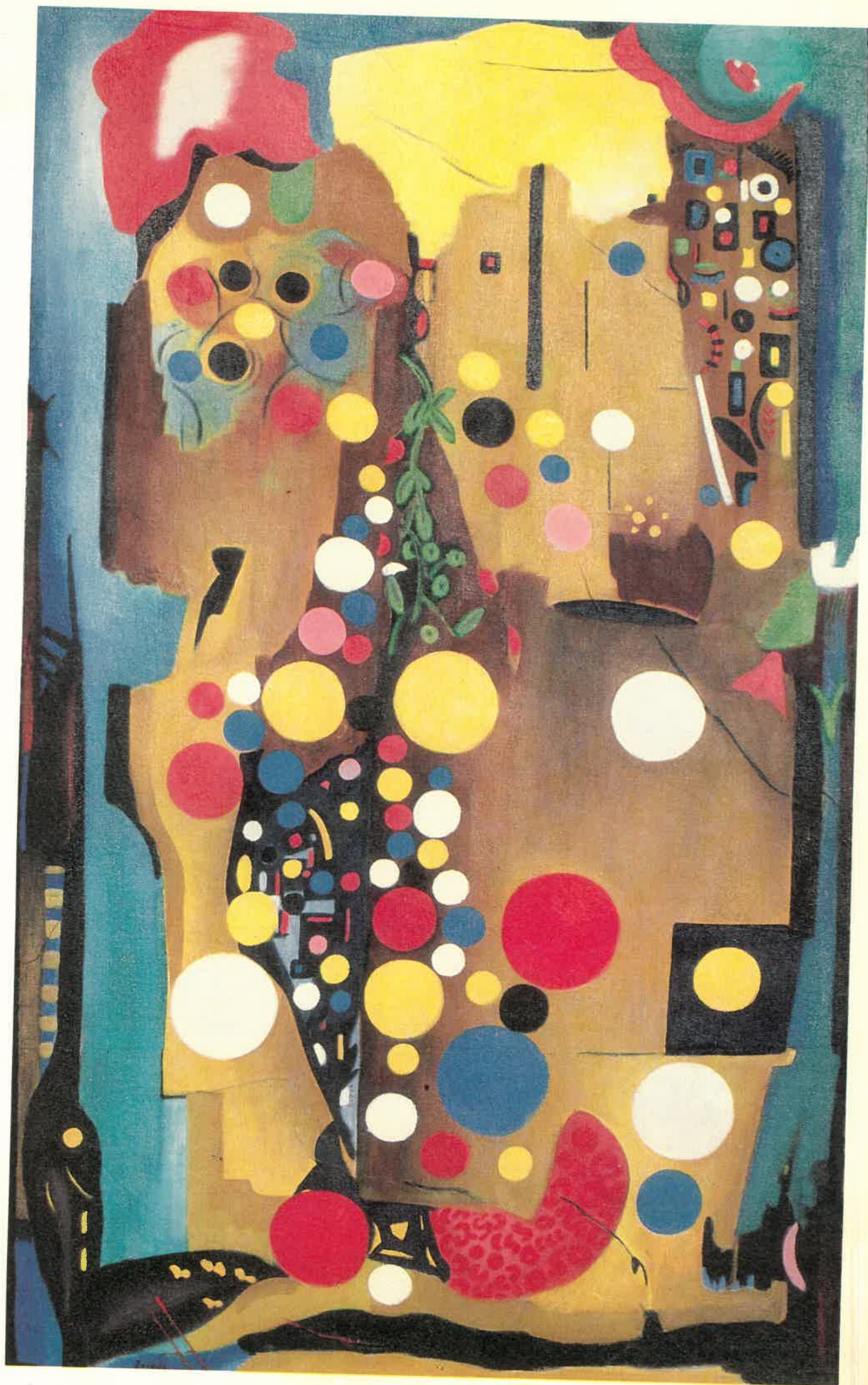
Manchester Guardian





Zubeida Agha

- 1922 Born at Faisalabad.
- 1944-46 Worked with B.C. Sanyal and took lessons from Mario Perlingieri, an Italian prisoner of war in India.
Awarded first prize for modern paintings in All India Exhibition held under the auspices of Society of Fine Arts, Lahore.
- 1950 Joined St. Martin's School, London.
- 1961 Appointed Director of Contemporary Art Galleries, Rawalpindi.
- 1965 Awarded President's Medal for Pride of Performance.
- 1982 Received Shakir Ali Award in the National Exhibition.
- 1949-88 Held several solo exhibitions at Karachi, London, Rawalpindi, Islamabad and participated in many group shows in Pakistan, Japan, Bangladesh, India and Germany.



AN ARTIST WHO CRAVES FOR ESSENCE OF THE THINGS

Zubeida Agha has a predilection for painting the essence of things and ideas rather than reproducing their apparent form. This led her to a very challenging path on which she had to meet opposition and even ridicule. She also had to work very hard and be endlessly patient. But eventually she succeeded in virtually changing painting in Pakistan. What aroused the hostility in artists of the Forties has now become a part of their own creed. Her revolt against the existing tradition stemmed from its mechanicalness and lack of vitality.

Under the impact of the British rule, the social order in the sub-continent was changing gradually. The upheaval brought about by the First World War and the consequent shake-up of the social order compelled people to question accepted values and inherited traditions. Painters, like poets and writers, were deeply influenced by the social change. The result, in the case of painting, was a revolt against the existing concept of painting and an almost complete break with tradition.

The leader of the revolt against tradition in India was Amrita Sher-Gill who had studied painting in Paris and produced work of great merit and originality.

LEADER OF REVOLT

In Pakistan, the leader of this revolt was Zubeida Agha though she consciously never planned to lead a revolt. In her case, it was not a protest merely for the sake of being different, but an effort to find a language of her own to express herself in a way not possible in the style then prevalent. The living vibrant paintings she produced were significant enough to encourage other painters to follow the same course. She, more than any other painter of Pakistan, realised at the outset of her career that painting was not merely a question of creating romantic and pleasing forms, but it was altogether a very serious business.

Unlike painters who work on the inspiration of the moment alone, Zubeida Agha believes in a very deliberate intellectual and emotional discipline. An artist has not only to take his or her work seriously, but has also to have a serious and responsible attitude to life. There can be no art for art's sake but art for life's sake. An artist's inspiration has to be under the discipline of an intellect which is concerned with the fundamental problems of human destiny of birth and death, of happiness and sorrow, of the overwhelming tragedy of human efforts to organize a better life and above all of the insoluble mystery of life itself. The artist has to face these questions again and again. What do men live by? What should men live by? Zubeida believes that an artist has to be a human being of great awareness and sympathy, and a responsible member of society.



INTELLECTUAL DISCIPLINE

Zubeida Agha's preoccupation with ideas is obvious in her paintings. Even her titles such as 'Future', and 'Youth and Symphony of Life' are significant. For example, 'The Cotton Pickers', one of the earliest of her paintings, sets out boldly to portray her aims and method. The colours are vivid and bright, yet harmonised successfully. The rigid intellectual discipline has resulted in a simplification of drawing and a rejection of unnecessary detail. There is deliberate and controlled attempt to simplify the structure of the painting and thus achieve a beautifully rhythmic quality.

Her first solo exhibition which was held in 1949 under the auspices of the Karachi Fine Art Society, resulted in a near riot. She was praised by some and bitterly criticised by others. The controversy raged in the press for weeks on. She was totally indifferent to criticism and has remained as serene as ever.

In 1950, she joined St. Martin's School London. In 1951, she had her first solo exhibition at Trafford Gallery, London. It was a very successful show. Reviewing her work, The Scotsman described her as a painter who catches some of the mystery of the East while appreciating the lighter side of the Western life.

In her earlier paintings, she is greatly occupied with structural design, rhythm and abstract ideas. Colour, as such, plays a secondary role. Deep browns, sombre reds and blues predominate. However, even in this period, there are a few paintings like 'Landscape with Horses' and 'The Wind' which have splashes of beautiful yellows, reds and light blues. It is in her later work that colour begins to play a more dominating role.

LYRICISM

Although Zubeida Agha is generally called abstractionist, she has painted comparatively few purely abstract paintings. If we take the majority of her earlier and middle period paintings into consideration, the dynamic quality apparent therein has more elements of Futurism than anything else. A painting which is merely a representation of objects and space (be it a portrait, a still life or a landscape), can be aesthetically satisfying and lyrical in quality.

However, it cannot have dynamic qualities unless it embodies a deeply felt intellectual idea or a properly crystalized emotional experience. Zubeida Agha's paintings embody both these and, therefore, have a dynamic quality. In her later paintings along with a greater flexibility and subtlety of expression, the colours are purer and used more boldly. Today Zubeida Agha is the best colourist in Pakistan.

Maturity of technique is noticeable in her later paintings. Her line is more flowing. She creates a rhythmic effect by bringing in a number of shapes and colours together. What to the untrained eye might appear as a haphazard arrangement of forms, reveals itself on closer scrutiny to be a carefully controlled and balanced pattern.

In spite of the diversity of subjects of her paintings, the main impression one gets is one of serenity. At the same time, a large number of her paintings evoke a sense of wonder.



ACCEPTANCE OF LIFE

The quest for understanding the nature of reality and the problems of life which started in 1944 gradually and imperceptibly, changed over the years into a joyful acceptance of life itself in its infinite variety, its beauty, its multitudinous colours and forms, the change of seasons, the drama of the rising and the setting sun and the enchanting softness of moonlight. All these and many more things like them are the ayat (signs) of Allah and their joyous acceptance, and living in harmony with His creation, is perhaps the very meaning and purpose of life.

Abdul Hamid

OPINION

Zubeida's most emphatic statement of colour, however, is found not in unbroken expanses, but in a group of paintings which have been associated and wrongly, with the stained-glass manner. These precisely cut red, blue and orange rectangles heavily blocked by thick black lines open on cityscapes, painted almost with a cubistic passion for the delineation of structure and the interaction of planes. In these paintings the abstract city comes to life in scintillating jewel-like colours. They capture all the life, movement and vibrancy of heavily populated cities, even though there is not a single citizen visible.

MORNING NEWS - 13TH MARCH, 1957

It is therefore, a most daunting and challenging exhibition. Passing from one painting to the other, the unwary viewer is apt to be baffled by the variety of moods and the artist's approach to her work. As if a whole stage of an artistic journey has been encapsulated in one painting. She is thus in turn pleasing, fierce, relaxed, tense, gay, exuberant or just angry. But in every work she comes out compellingly strong.

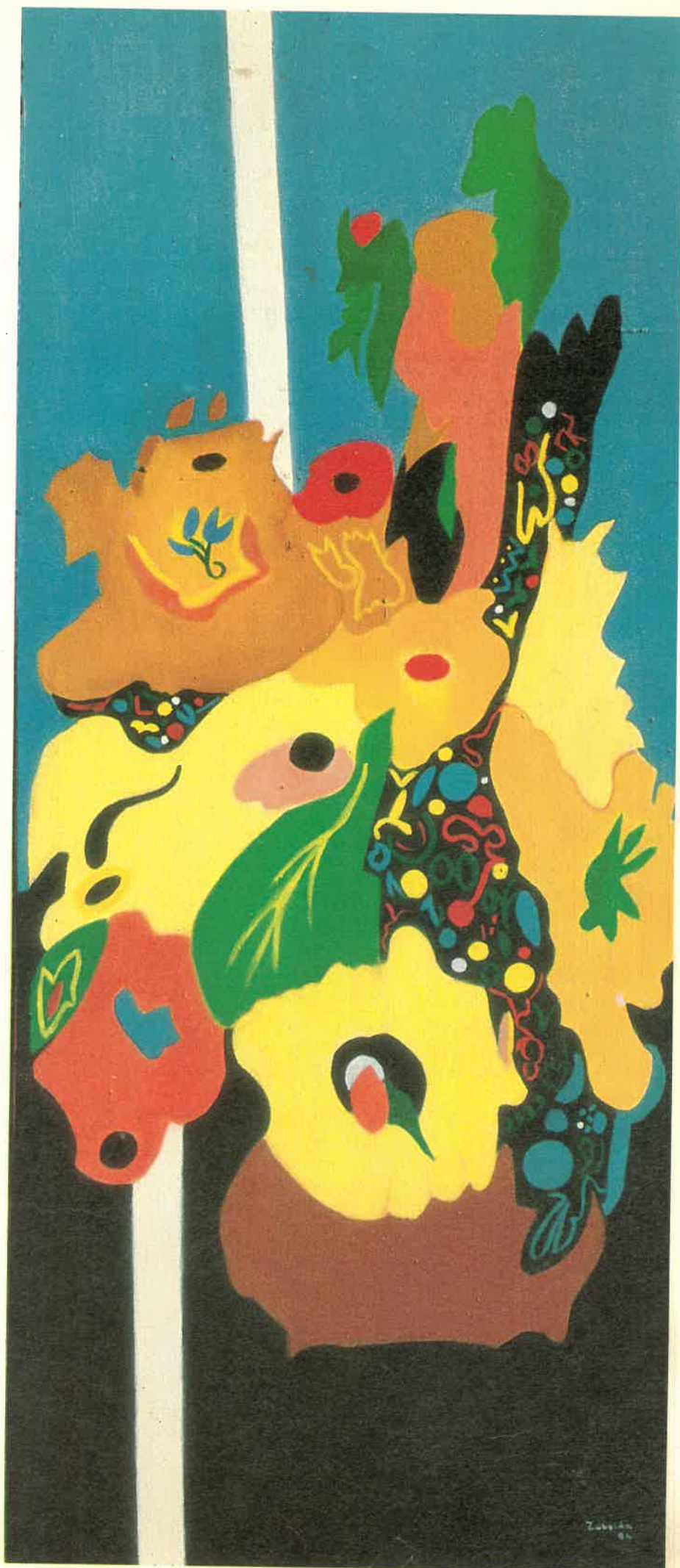
PAKISTAN TIMES-27TH MARCH 1973

Zubeida Agha's paintings pulsate with lyricism. Harmonious colours of vitality executed with a finesse and rhythm of elegantly drawn geometrical and curvilinear form lend a rare kind of charm and symphonious character to her works.

PAKISTAN TIMES-6TH FEBRUARY 1985

If Zubeida Agha can maintain this with her natural simplicity of vision, whilst arriving at the technical means most suitable to her temperament and racial tradition, the time will arrive when these three elements will be in co-partnership. On that day I think Pakistan will be able to say here in Zubeida Agha we have the creative artist around whom we can rebuild the culture of our country.

MELVILLE HARDIMENT





Guljee

- 1926 Born at Peshawar on 25th October
- 1950 First exhibition of his work which was mainly portraiture.
- 1954 Exhibition of his paintings at Warsak.
- 1955-57 Secretary in the Pakistan Embassy at Ottawa. Held exhibitions at Ottawa and Niagara Falls.
- 1957 Commissioned by the Prime Minister of Pakistan to do a portrait of King Zahir Shah of Afghanistan.
- 1959 Exhibited his work comprising 151 paintings and sketches, including portraits of the Afghan King and his family.
- 1960-70 Painted portraits of dignitaries and made sketches of distinguished visitors to Pakistan.
- 1970 Awarded President's Medal for Pride of Performance
- 1982 Awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz
- 1986 Designed and built Crescent & star in gold for Shah Faisal Mosque in Islamabad. Also did calligraphy in stone and marble inside the mosque.
- to date

NUMBER 16
31 x 31 cms., Oil, 1974

POLO GAME
Lapis Lazuli, 95 x 97 cms.



PORTRAITIST OF THE ELITE

His first full-fledged exhibition of paintings consisted of portraits of the King of Afghanistan and his family. That was in 1959 at Kabul.

In 1961, he painted Prince Karim Agha Khan; in 1964 Chou En-Lai; in 1965 Queen Farah Diba of Iran; in 1968 President Ayub Khan of Pakistan, and in that year he went with the latter on a grand tour of Europe where he made quick drawings of all the Heads of State and other dignitaries that Ayub Khan met and also of some of their meetings.

PORTRAIT STYLE

His portrait of Ayub Khan was the last portrait he painted, except for an excellent portrait of the Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, which was done in 1983. However, it is not in the same class as his other portraits because it was not done from life, the subject having been long dead.

But no painter has been able to catch the easy dignity and nobility of character of the Quaid in as better a manner as Gulgee. The bold straight look, the tight lips, the firm jaw and the upright neck and head are an epitome of the Quaid's qualities.

His style of painting is distinctive. The play of light and colour on the different planes and facets of the physiognomy has been captured, not through laborious detail but through apparently rough dabs judiciously placed. The graded tones of flesh colour and the green or mauve shadows so created render the face and features very effectively.

The treatment avoids hardness of contour and leaves the lineaments of the face and the colour tones diffuse, as in nature, while it captures the tonal variations of light and colour on the many facets and angles of the form.



PORTRAITS IN STONE

It was during his sojourn at Kabul in 1959 that Gulgee discovered and developed the art of making portraits in stone mosaic, that is, in coloured marble, called onyx, and later in lapis lazuli, sometimes even studded with diamonds, as in the case of the portraits of President Reagan that President Zia-ul-Haq took with him to Washington in 1982 to present to the American Head of State.

Since 1968, Gulgee has been making portraits in stone only and in this medium has gained such proficiency that his work is in demand with the royalty. The first portrait he made in onyx was that of the King of Afghanistan in 1959. In 1975 he made a commissioned portrait of King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz in lapis lazuli. It was to be presented to the great monarch but he was assassinated a few months before it was completed. In 1983, he made a portrait of Prince Karim Aga Khan.

It is astonishing that he can render in stone the most delicate nuances of colour and tone which would be difficult to catch even in paint when only a flick of the brush is required. In stone mosaic, on the other hand, a piece of the right colour has to be selected out of a mixed pile of hundreds of stones and matched in colour with the piece next to it in the picture and then cut and polished to the exact size. The choice of this particular medium invested his works with new dimensions.



ACTION PAINTING

Gulgee is equally well known for his Action Paintings, done in the American manner. He has gained such facility in this style that he turns out paintings with astonishing ease in minutes but it is a derivative style and he cannot build a high reputation on this base.

However, noteworthy and innovative is his use of this style in rendering the Arabic verses of the Quran. The sweeping curves and loops and parabola of the Arabic script proved very suitable for the gestural, impulsive Action painting.

CALLIGRAPHIC BRONZE SCULPTURE

A novel departure made by Gulgee, which is unprecedented in the annals of art, is the creation of free standing calligraphic sculpture in bronze rendering the verses of the Holy Quran.

He initiated this work in 1967 and it was first exhibited at Expo '70, Tokyo. In 1969, he made the bronze emblem for the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Karachi. This was a large circular sculpture, standing on edge, representing the famous verse of the Quran, Hold fast to the rope of God and be not divided.

Throughout 1986, he was engaged in designing and fabricating an enormous crescent and star in thick copper plate to be installed on the pinnacle of the multi-million dollar Faisal Mosque in Islamabad.

S. Amjad Ali





Jamil Naqsh

Dec. 25, 1939 Born at Kairana, U.P. India. Studied miniature painting with Ustad Mohammad Sharif

1953-55 Studied at Mayo School of Art, Lahore

1961 Awarded first prize by Women's India National Club, Karachi.

1962-72 Exhibitions in and outside Pakistan



A MODERN EXPRESSIONIST

Painting for more than 26 years now, Jamil Naqsh has for long occupied a place of prominence among Pakistani painters. He has a unique style, which is instantly recognizable and which made a critic to say of him "even if Jamil Naqsh were not to sign his works, he would be unmistakably recognized by his nudes and birds."

His themes apart, what makes his work distinct is the unmatched skill and craftsmanship plus the nuances of his own particular person and experience which Jamil imparts to his art.

Over the years, Jamil's skill and popularity has made him a shaping influence on people's aesthetic sensibilities and created a taste for paintings as paintings; it has also helped many a painter to turn away from pure abstraction — a fact which pleases Jamil.

On a few artists, however, he has had a more potent, almost crippling influence. At the moment, there is at least one artist in Pakistan, Karachi's Iqbal Durrani, who tries to imitate not just Jamil's subject but also his treatment of it.

Recently Ali Imam, gallery owner, teacher-painter while talking about the difficulty of distinguishing an original from its copy after a period of time said, supposing after a hundred years, someone were to chance on a Jamil or a Durrani, he could easily mistake one for the other.

Probably not, because no one but Jamil can bring to a Jamil what Jamil does.

Jamil's craft embodies a dedicated apprenticeship to the development of his mind and art which cannot so easily be duplicated. An apprenticeship which encompasses influences as diverse as those absorbed from his miniaturist father, and the expressionist father-figure of Shakir Ali, Pakistan's pioneering modern artist and Jamil's mentor, who paid his protege the supreme compliment of acknowledging Jamil's superiority. It's an apprenticeship which leaves on every Jamil canvas a stamp as distinct as a signature.

Other painters in Pakistan have painted nude and achieved technical perfection in it, but none can match the classic grandeur of the best of Jamil's canvases which can hold one spellbound by their peculiar magic.



Jamil Naqsh

Eastern as his miniatures, Jamil is as modern an expressionist as any in the West. In his work, there is evident the natural human urge to embrace the best of everything, of all that time has honoured and be worthy of it.

Over the years, the reviewers have waxed eloquent over him, making him of all living artists in Pakistan the one most written about. They have extolled the way he handles colours as pigments being of priceless value... his textures which he alone can spin and weave... his handling of the line, his balance between space and form... his compositions are consummate exercises in the elimination of inessential... no one has used empty, unadorned space more imaginatively than Naqsh. They have exulted over how his pigments achieve the same richness as our ancient oriental masters achieved in the Middle East, Iran and Turkey with precious metals and gems. They have pointed out how painting for him is a compulsion, not a vocation... his work is matter of pride and joy for any collector.

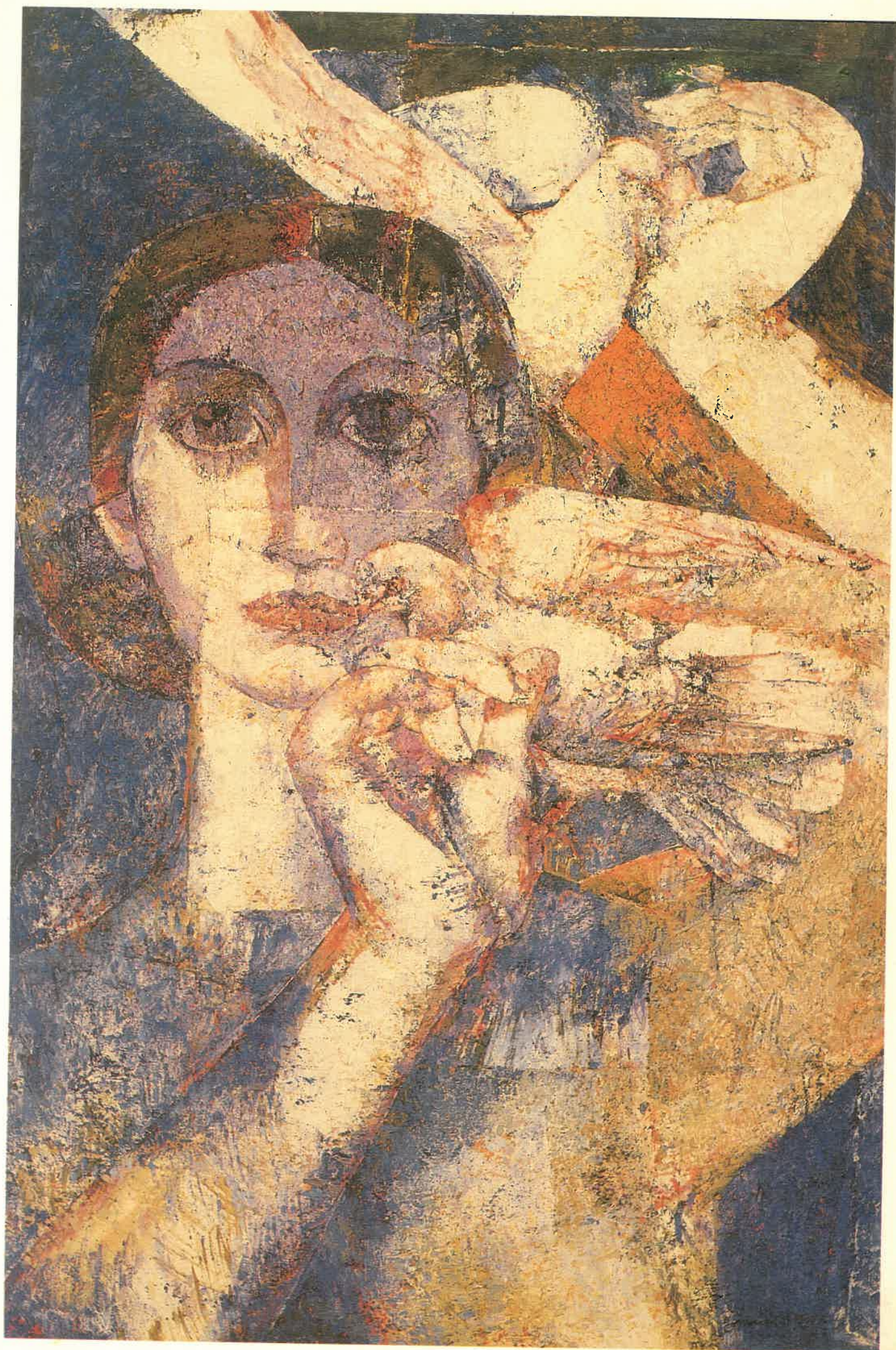
All this and much more the critics have said over and over again over the years but despite all the many words, the magic of a Jamil remains as undecipherable as ever. Marvel as you may at the texture, the line, the pigment and the fine interplay of the various elements, you still cannot penetrate the charm with which Jamil captivates you.

VARIATIONS ON A LIMITED THEME

Winning applause and award, over the years, including the Shakir Ali Award, Jamil seems beyond the din and tumult of praise. Attuned only to his own inner evaluation, painting to please his own critical self, he pursues an infinite variation of his preferred theme like one of his favourites, Italian sculptor, painter, draftsman, Marino Marini. Indeed, what has been said of Marino could as well have been said of Jamil: He is not the daring innovator or the impatient experimenter — rather he has worked infinite variations on a very limited theme ... it is the very concentration, the subtle nuancing of the variations that attract and then beguiles us.

Talking of the future, Jamil has the self-confidence to declare: These recent decades of painting in Pakistan will be known not as Sadequain's or anyone else's but as mine.

Sabiha Ashraf



OPINION

In certain ways Jamil Naqsh is perhaps one of Pakistan's most determined artist for the last twenty years or perhaps more. He has been painting one subject only, a girl and pigeon. It may seem unbelievable but he has been able to conceive this theme in endless ways, manners and forms, the unity which he creates between the bird and the model is fascinating in each canvas as though one could not exist without other.

Prof. Ijaz-ul-Hasan

One of the most impressive paintings of the exhibition was that of Jamil Naqsh who continues to use the figurative theme of the woman and the pigeon but covers it with such a bewildering mesh of lights and colours that the eyes wonder drunkenly from area to area, lost in the pleasing labyrinth.

S. Amjad Ali

What Jamil Naqsh achieves is an aesthetic variety of tones arranged between paper, water and pigment. As against this background of chromatic music can be seen female nudes, their limbs with sensuous resonance.

Dr. Akbar Naqvi
The Daily Dawn
5/10/1979

Jamil Naqsh is a quiet young man who shies at any mention of publicity and yet remains one of Pakistan's most prominent and sought after artists.

Murqee
International
Oct. 1973

