

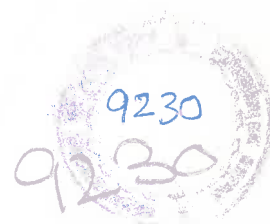
The Sun
blazes the
colours
through
my window

Anna Molka Ahmed

Marjorie Husain

*"The sun blazes the colours
through my window..."*

Anna Molka Ahmed



*by
marjorie husain*

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'The Sun Blazes The Colours Through My Window'
Anna Molka Ahmed

By

Marjorie Husain

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Orange and Blue!
Yellow and Mauve!
Green and Red!

But I am in bed!

The sun blazes the colours through my window
A Glory!

But I lie inert with a broken thigh.

(The Sick Artist-poem by Anna Molka)

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Special thanks to *Samia Bukhari of the Publications Department of NCA, who was there every inch of the way and made it enjoyable. For her positive support and infinite patience, thanks indeed, and to *Frederick Nazareth, my irreplaceable Editor. *Hamid Husain was as usual a tremendous source of encouragement and assistance in so many ways.

Much appreciated was the contribution of *Arif Chughtai, who while I was visiting an exhibition at the Chughtai Museum, quite by chance mentioned the portfolio Anna Molka had taken on her first interview at the Punjab University in 1940. This was sent to A. R. Chughtai for consideration and is now in the collection of the Museum. Arif very kindly shared the portfolio contents with us and allowed us to photograph the very early work of the artist.

*There was valued encouragement from Mussarat Naheed Imam, who very kindly shared the experience of the enormously significant exhibition of Anna Molka Ahmed's work that she curated for PNCA. And at an art related workshop arranged by Ms. Mussarat in Islamabad, I was fortunate to meet *Geytee Ara, a Graduate of the Fine Arts Department who had been a student of Anna Molka's. Geytee introduced me to *Zarar Haider Babary, another of the Department Graduates, who had been a great

admirer and a friend of Anna Molka. Zarar was extremely helpful, he shared some of Anna Molka's early drawings and designs, and gave me a copy of the interview taken while Anna Molka was in hospital after a fall, which was extremely moving. He had also documented the condition of Anna Molka's paintings in those days, when like many artists at the end of the road, she desperately wished for a gallery to preserve her work.

Then there are a galaxy of friends and one time students of Anna Molka, who related a series of colourful anecdotes of their experiences. *Nagori, *Jamila Zaidi, *Ghulam Mustafa, *Lala Rukh and *Ghulam Rasul, were among those who remembered the great lady, and I am especially thankful to *Zubeida Javed, and *Rahat Naveed Masood, who spoke in depth of Anna Molka, and brought the past to life for me with tears, tantrums and the pride Mrs. Ahmed felt in successive generations of her students.

*Mrs. Nusrat Ali, is also due thanks. She was another of Anna Molka's closely regarded students, and she spoke of 'cleaning her teacher's dentures' for her when she was very ill. Nusrat kindly allowed the photography of Anna Molka's paintings from the Lahore Museum collection for our book. Heartfelt thanks to *Naseer Ahmed Baluch, who was a great encouragement and did so much to help in various aspects of the book, its design and photography as well as the technicalities. He and his dynamic, great team at Topical, contributed enormously. Finally many thanks to *Aamir Ali, who appeared to enter Anna Molka's life as he worked, and to so many others who had met, and whose lives had been touched, by the incredible lady. It was a great privilege to have known her.

Foreword

Anna Molka Ahmed will always be remembered for her indomitable spirit and great determination, which she brought into full play to convince the Punjab University, Lahore, to establish a Department of Fine Arts. She nurtured it like her own child, saw it to a state of maturity and sustained it with passion. The Department and Anna Molka fused together to forge an identity – a crusading spirit – that affected the society of Lahore and its girls. Her own professional growth is intrinsically interwoven with the department which she headed from its inception in 1940 till her retirement in 1975. Mrs Ahmed strode through life leaving an indelible mark both as an artist and an iconic figure.

My sister and a cousin were her students and through them I got to know of her. Her students admired her and were, to a small degree, overawed by her. Later in life I got to know her better and she would sometimes visit me at the NCA and we would spend a delightful hour reminiscing of old times. That is when I developed a deep admiration of her. She gave no quarter and asked for none; she had opinions which were well thought out and based on solid logic; she was an inspiration in dedication and strength. She was indeed the stuff that myths are made of.

I am delighted with the book Marjorie Husain has written on her. It was long overdue and I am grateful that Marjorie has done it with grace and accuracy.

The co-publishers, Research and Publication Center, NCA and Ferozsons Ltd also deserve appreciation for carrying on the objectives of the RPC and maintaining the standard.

Prof. Sajida Haider Vandal
Principal
National College of Arts,
Lahore.



The early years: Young Molly

Anna Molka Bridger, born on August 13, 1917, was named by her Polish grandmother. Her mother found the name a bit 'foreign' sounding for the British born baby and in close family circles she was always known as 'Molly'. Her parents were Jewish, her father born in Azerbaijan, arriving in England as a twelve year old boy escaping the pogroms that killed his parents. Sam Bridger had a sister married in England who got him apprenticed to a tailor. He was hardworking, glad of the opportunity to get ahead, and in time he built and ran a flourishing business of his own. Although, he never had the chance of a formal education, nor saw the necessity for higher education, his five children, were all well educated mainly through their own efforts.

Pearl, the eldest girl was a model child. Clever and quick, she was a school monitor and later, head girl of the school in Hammersmith she and her sisters attended. She was constantly called upon to get her younger sister Molly out of trouble. There was a particular incident when Anna Molka faced expulsion after being caught in the act of drawing a caricature of the geography teacher on the black-board. The head mistress was called and Pearl as head girl, was summoned to a grave meeting in which the teacher demanded Molly's expulsion. Eventually she was allowed to remain in the school but the geography teacher refused to tutor her, so science was substituted as a subject in place of geography. Pearl became a successful career woman and led an interesting

life. She never married but was always on hand to advise and help her younger sisters, and on her death left her tidy savings to her ten nephews and nieces, including Molly's two girls.

The youngest sister, Rhoda was the baby of the family who replaced Molly as daddy's favourite. When Rhoda was born, Molly's position in the family changed. No longer the baby, neither was she a member of the close-knit group formed by her three elder siblings. In later years she admitted to feelings of loneliness that persisted throughout her teens. The two youngest sisters had a special fondness for each other and through the years kept up a regular, affectionate correspondence, both enjoying every opportunity to reminisce about the happy family circle they once enjoyed. In those letters Molly nostalgically recalled family picnics, hikes through the countryside, the birthdays, other celebrations and their mother's cooking. They were happy memories, yet in later years, Anna Molka admitted to being a difficult child, a rebel from an early age and a great trial to her father. It seems that all Sam Bridger's children renounced Judaism. Rhoda married out of her faith and, against the doctor's advice, had two much loved children. She suffered numerous health problems and when she died Molly was deeply saddened. The husband remarried far sooner than Molly approved of and she ceased to have anything to do with him. Molly had two brothers, Harold who became a Psychologist and established the Tavistock Clinic in London, and



Molly with her father Mr. Bridger



Pearl, Molly and Rhoda Bridger.

Marcus who made his career in education and was never close to the family. After Anna left England she never met him again. Kind, caring Harold was Molly's childhood hero. He was conscripted to the army from his University Officers Training Corps even before the war started, and went off telling Molly to stay with her mother, but she had already made other plans.

Molly was a constant worry to Mr. Bridger. She questioned everything - her religion, her father's wishes and hopes for her, and life in general. While her father was convinced that marriage was the best career for a girl, Anna Molka had dreams of her own. She was keen to study art. While at school, she applied for a London County Council Scholarship to St. Martin's School of Art, and when she won the scholarship, her father fiercely opposed it. He did not hold with art or artists and spoke disapprovingly of 'drawing from the nude and all that other nonsense'. With great difficulty his wife induced him to permit their daughter to study for one year, persuading him that she would study Fashion Drawing and Design, qualify in one year and then be equipped to get a job. It was a scholarship with a maintenance grant, and all work materials supplied to the student. Anna yearned for the privilege of three years of art study, but was determined she would cover the three-year course in one year.

St. Martins School conducted evening classes, so after her daytime classes were over Anna continued in the evenings, working from 9:00 in the morning till 9:30 at night and arriving home every night around 10:00 pm. She later recalled the stylish outfit she made for herself, a shocking pink artist's smock with a black velvet bow and matching black velvet beret. It was much admired by her friends among the fashion and design students who could not understand why painting and sculpture meant so much to her when she had such a flair for design. As the year drew to



Molly's maternal grandparents and family.

a close, Anna discussed her problems with her Fashion teacher, who turned to the principal for advice. He requested a meeting with Mrs. Bridger, and told her that as Anna was doing so well, it would be wrong to terminate her studies. Anna later related: "Mummy did the magic and managed to get Daddy to agree to one more year. At this stage there was no return; I had tasted the Fine Arts and come what may was determined to continue."

Intent on her course, Anna applied for a Senior Scholarship to the Royal College of Art, and rather than spark off any family row, forged her father's signature on the application form. When she was awarded the scholarship, one of only two successful applicants out of many, heated arguments ensued. Anna Molka described her mother as a sort of "buffer state between two warring factions". Her furious father slapped the

fuming girl who informed him through clenched teeth that she would take up the scholarship come what may, even if he turned her out of the house. Anna's mother wept and implored her husband not to turn Anna out, and eventually Mr. Bridger reluctantly gave in to her pleas.

As she related in later life, in her teens Anna Molka began to search for the 'truth'. She rejected Judaism, finding it too rigid for her taste, and was drawn to Islam. She attended meetings of Muslim scholars, and of the Indian Freedom League, and became friends with Indian students in London. In 1935, at the age of eighteen she converted to Islam. Anna remained a devout Muslim throughout her turbulent life and on numerous occasions was to take comfort from prayer. In her paintings one discovers a strong spiritual aspect regardless of the subject, and in later years she created large-scale, complex



The Bridger's family. Back row left to right Marcus, Pearl and Harold. front row left to right Molly and Rhoda.

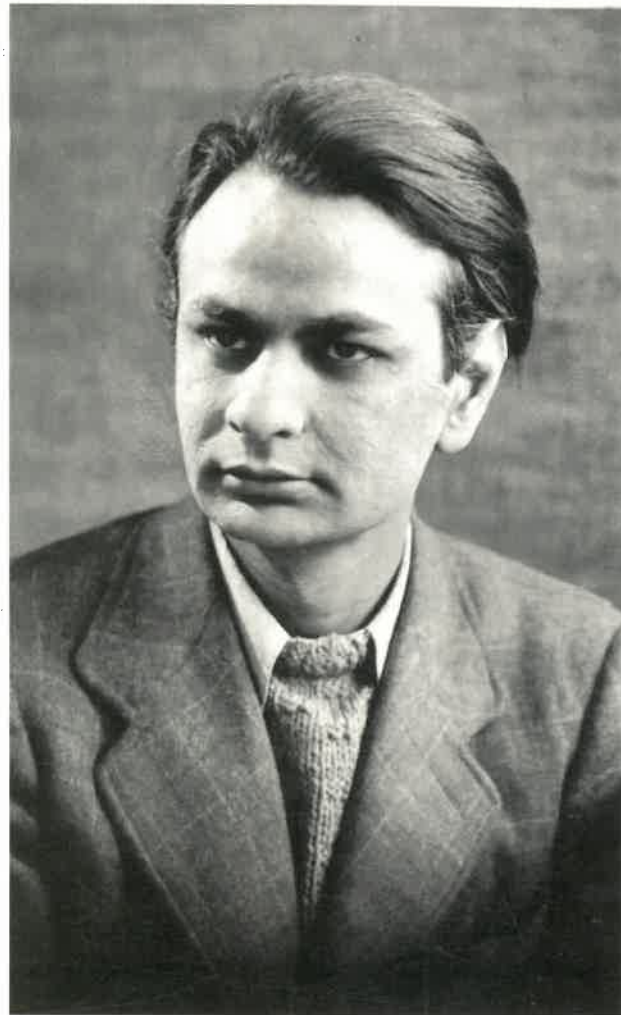
interpretations of the concepts of Heaven, Hell and the Day of Judgment.

Anna met Sheikh Ahmed in London, and the two fell passionately in love. He was about fifteen years older than Anna, personable, interesting and popular. She adored him, sought guidance from him, and at the same time cared for him as

he had a history of health problems. In India, Sheikh Ahmed had studied for two years at the Calcutta School of Art until illness cut short his studies. Restored to health, he joined the Bombay Engineering College on the insistence of his father, and from there went to America where he obtained a diploma in Automobile Engineering from Michigan State Aviation and Automobile

School. He then became seriously ill with lung trouble and decided to go home, stopping on the way in London. In her memoirs Anna described him at that time as a good man, religious and believing that good deeds were active prayers. "He was two inches taller than me, about five feet seven and slim in those days. He had been ill in America; the gasoline fumes had affected his lungs...His hair was always flopping about because it was so thick he could do nothing with it. He hated to wear ties but he did wear one on our wedding day, it had a huge knot and was slightly crooked."

Sheikh Ahmed lived at 19, Fitzroy Street, famed as once being artist Walter Sickert's studio in London. Molly described it as a big, gloomy house inhabited by students. Sheikh's studio was always full of his friends; there was lots of laughter and conversation, with Sheikh making *parathas* for everyone. Anna Molka was a lively young girl full of energy. She obtained her mother's permission to learn ballroom dancing but Sheikh persuaded her to give up the lessons as he was uncomfortable with her being in such close proximity to a dancing partner. It was also about this time, Anna related, that her mother bought her a pair of beautiful snakeskin shoes, her first high heels to make her feel 'grown-up'. Sheikh took her on a long walk to 'meet some people,' a distance of nine miles there and back, and by the time they returned Anna's heels were sore and bleeding. She never wore the shoes again. In her own words: "No lipstick, no make-up, and no jazz." Sheikh insisted that Anna Molka study Graphic Design instead of painting and modeling, explaining that in his country painting was a luxury, a useless subject for a student who wanted to earn a living to support his family. He said the applied arts, advertising, posters, illustration and book production would be more useful. "So I joined the Design School instead of the Painting School as planned. Deep down I resented it but I was in love; I was going to marry Sheikh and go to



Sheikh Ahmad

his country and do social work, bring out books for children and train some talented boys in book illustration and advertising. I would propagate art".

Anna continued to work long hours. She began at the Royal College at 9.00am and continued till 3:30: pm. Then after a tea-break of half an hour, the evening classes of compulsory life drawing followed from 4pm till 6pm. Sheikh invariably collected Molly from the gates and accompanied her to the Central School of Arts and Crafts where she studied book crafts, typography, marbling and other subjects, till 9.00 pm. "In those days the Royal College lacked a printing workshop but they did teach bookbinding, which I learnt. I became friends with a few jolly girls from different parts of England, especially a girl named Peggy



Molly in London with Hasrat Mohani and portrait.

Sturgeon from Poole in Dorset. The boys gave me long lectures telling me that I should not be going about with an Asian etc. etc. but we told them to mind their own business. I was amused as the boys obviously wanted to date me themselves. I liked Sheikh's possessiveness and my inherent feelings of loneliness were banished".

Sheikh Ahmed had returned to studying art and won a Senior Art Scholarship, the first Asian student in Britain to do so. In the Central School of Art he was known as a very fine draughtsman and was invited to become a member of the Senefelder Club of Lithographers of the World, a great honour. "Everyone liked him and his work, both teachers and students. He was happy in England, appreciation gave him confidence." Anna reported. He became an assistant teacher and was there at the time when A.R. Chughtai joined the Central Institute to study etching. At one time Sheikh Ahmed became extremely ill when an abscess on his lung burst. He was

hospitalized for nine months followed by three months convalescence. Though Mr. Bridger strongly objected to Sheikh Ahmed, Mrs. Bridger was sympathetic. "Mother was wonderful. She baked light as feather sponge cakes for him and all sorts of special dishes and made me take eggs and fruit to the hospital for him. She washed and ironed his pyjamas, and had everything ready for me to take along to the hospital during the visiting hours after my college." Sheikh Ahmed kept on his Fitzroy Street Studio during his illness, and before he was declared well enough to return home, Anna and her girlfriends gave the studio a thorough clean-up.

As the threat of war loomed closer, Sheikh Ahmed, who had been abroad for thirteen years, made plans to visit his family longing to see the mother he loved so dearly. He told Anna of his dream to set up a printing press for children's books and fired her enthusiasm to contribute to the art education of his homeland. Anna Molka



*9th September, 1939
Molly and Sheikh's wedding day.*

completed her art education and graduated as Associate of the Royal College – Design (A.R.C.A.) with Certificates in Wood-Engraving, Lithography, Copper Engraving, Etching, Dry point and Aquatint. Her qualifications included: History of Art and Architecture, Technical methods of Sculpture, Technical Methods of Graphic Design, Techniques of Painting and Pigments, Methods of Art Teaching and Art Appreciation.

As war appeared ever more imminent in Britain, Mr. Bridger shut up the London home and moved his family to Wolverhampton, which he surmised to be comparatively safer. When Anna persisted in her relationship with Sheikh Ahmed, Mr. Bridger, furious with his daughter, locked her in her bedroom and went off to work leaving his poor wife to suffer the loud continuous sobs emanating from Molly's room. Thanks to cancellations, Sheikh had managed to acquire two tickets for a ship leaving from Tilbury for Bombay on 19th September, 1939, and he wanted Molly to marry him before that date and sail with

him to India. Sobbing and refusing to eat, Molly's plight wrung her mother's heart. She tried talking to her daughter. "Don't go to that far off land Molly, get married but stay here. Supposing, God forbid, anything should happen, we are here to look after you. We love you. There you will be alone, thousands of miles away surrounded by strangers." Those words of her mother, unheeded by the headstrong, young woman who had just turned twenty-two, were to haunt her in the difficult years ahead. Mrs. Bridger unlocked the bedroom door and Anna rushed off to London. Her mother had stitched a false patch on to Molly's petticoat and filled it with one pound notes, and she gave her the key to the London house. Traveling alone for the first time, the young woman departed by train for London, all around her were pale, grim faces. It was a time of parting in Britain, loved ones were separated and unsure of what the future held.

Arriving in London, to be met by Sheikh waiting at the station, Anna regained her courage. With

her arm in his, and a date set for the marriage, she thought she would never be lonely again. The wedding took place at St. Pancras Registry Office on 9th September, 1939. The registry office looked very austere banked by sandbags in preparation for the long years of war ahead, but Peggy Sturgeon, Mollie's best friend, attended the wedding and two of Sheikh Ahmed's closest friends were witnesses.

When Peggy left she hugged Anna saying, "Keep your chin up Anna, the war will soon be over; you'll be visiting us. Be happy... be happy... be happy." But Anna was not happy. That night she wept quietly, pretending to sleep. "Honour thy father and thy mother ...I had disobeyed Daddy and run away, left Mummy when Harold had told me to stay with her. The sandbag wedding and Sheikh's joking friends had got on my nerves.

Peggy had gone away and I had to be happy. I had thought I'd never be alone again, yet the lonely feeling persisted."

Before the couple sailed away to begin their new life across the ocean, they packed their paintings inside the hollow of the roof above Sheikh's studio. "Perhaps we'll find them safe when we return" thought Anna, "if we return. Why think of returning when we haven't reached our destination yet? I'll think about it tomorrow". Before they left England, Anna and Sheikh met Anna's mother who saw them off in tears. "Write to me as often as possible", she said, "Be happy dear and if you change your mind come back." Sheikh swore he would send Anna home to visit her every year and Anna, all unknowing, looked into the soft, tear filled blue grey eyes for what was to be the last time.



Early drawings of Anna Molka Ahmed at Royal College of Art, London. Courtesy: Chughtai museum.



Anna Molka with Sheikh Ahmed and guests, Punjab University Annual Exhibition.

*“There Were Many Really
Good Landscapes...”*

Out of her salary, twenty rupees had to be sent to Sheikh's mother every month, and the couple searched for ways of earning extra money, apart from what they got for their radio talks. They tried to interest printing and publishers houses in their illustration techniques. “We explained

that we could draw the illustrations on the lithographic plate in reverse so that it could be printed with the calligrapher's script, and we would shade the drawings with lithographic crayon or paint it. Coloured lithographs could be made by drawing on more than one plate according

to the number of colours required. We explained that this technique was more artistic and less expensive than the three-colour or four-colour process. We showed them the book we had written and illustrated for Country Life Book Publishers in England, but no-one was interested. They said that unlike the western publishers, they had no money and only black outline work was done for A B C or Urdu Kaidas, and they could get untrained artists to do these illustrations for eight annas per drawing and sometimes even less”.

Sheikh continued to write the first volume of a series of text books on Muslim Architecture that he had started in London. He felt that Muslims should know their great heritage and as the majority could not afford the cost of large illustrated volumes, he proposed to write a series of simple text books for students. When he finalized the text, he busied himself selecting the illustrations and gradually getting the blocks made as and when he could afford them. When it finally went to print Sheikh Ahmed spent his days at the Ripon Press, proof reading and designing the layout of pages. A number of friends paid for copies in advance to help cover the expense of publication.

Sheikh insisted that the notes Anna Molka had compiled for teaching her students the History of Art also be published in a simple text book form, an introduction to Art Appreciation. Sheikh supervised its printing and, when the book was ready, it proved so popular that a second edition had to be brought out. Anna Molka wanted to revise and add to the contents of the book and refused to permit any more editions to be printed after that. “The students who bought this book are now teachers and still use it as a guide, and I still want to revise ...but there is no Sheikh to urge me on to work at it.”

In 1942, the first Intermediate Fine Arts Examination was held, and to enable the students



Mr. and Mrs. Sheikh Ahmed

to continue their subjects, the University instituted Fine Arts as an elective subject for the B.A. degree as well. At the Intermediate level the students were taught drawing in pencil, charcoal and pastel; and techniques of watercolour and poster colour used for painting portraits, figures, landscapes, still-lives and compositions. They learned Basic Design and painted Colour Charts in order to learn about Primary, Secondary, Tertiary and Complimentary Colours. Traditional Miniature Painting was introduced as a subject, as was the History of Art, with an Outline of Ancient Civilizations to Roman Times and including the Indus Valley Civilization and the Buddhist Civilization.

When the new East Wing was ready for them, Anna Molka arranged an exhibition of her students' work in the large studio of the upper storey of the university. Lady Glancy, the wife of the Governor, inaugurated the exhibition and drew the attention of high officials to the department and work in progress. The function



Anna at her easel.

was a huge success and the students felt enormously encouraged. In the two years of Intermediate work, emphasis had been laid on all graphic media such as watercolour, pastels, poster colour, charcoal and pencil. Though the majority of the life drawings could not be displayed, Anna Molka recorded "there were many really good watercolour landscapes and still-life displayed, but the design work was even more appreciated." She noted with glee that, "The hand-weavers of the 'Khadur Bandar' were very intrigued and started to copy my student's designs from the exhibition hall. When my students reported this to me, we met the copyists and told

them they must pay for each design, or give each student-designer a length of cloth woven or printed with the design. The students and the copyists were delighted with this arrangement."

Anna Molka invited a number of educationists to visit the exhibition, taking them around and personally describing the importance given to art in other countries. She spoke of the need for their cooperation to evolve an overall plan for Art Education. Anna Molka was invited to attend Art Committee meetings in the Department of Education. At every meeting to consider the Drawing syllabus, she suggested replacing it with

an Art syllabus for general school education leading to elective Art syllabus for the pre-Matric and Matriculation level. Invariably she met with a negative response. Convinced she was right, Anna Molka carried on with her mission, speaking to Directors, Secretaries and Inspectors in the Education Department. They were all of the opinion that art was too expensive a subject to introduce in the school curriculum, and that in a poor country money had to be spent on more 'useful' subjects. Sometimes she would get so carried away that she would raise her voice, thump on the table and grow red with frustration in her efforts to put her point across. She soon developed the reputation of being a formidable woman.

Meanwhile Anna Molka and Sheikh Ahmed were delighted that the Department of Education had

at last given Sheikh work on contract. Anna hoped this would lead to a permanent post. "He was a very good teacher and could not fail to please them" she said. Sheikh had to train a batch of students to be drawing masters. He began to teach them mornings and evenings, raising their educational standard as well as proficiency in drawing, and with design added as his own contribution. Sadly, it turned out that he had over-trained his students. At the end of the course not one of them accepted the standard position, which offered a salary of forty rupees per month. Every one of the students obtained a better post, one even landing a position with a Publishing House in Delhi at a salary of Rs.800 per month. The Officials of the Department were furious with Sheikh and, instead of appreciating his efforts they declared that the course had failed.



An interlude in Kashmir

To escape the heat of summer, in 1941, Anna and Sheikh traveled to Srinagar, and to Anna it seemed she had entered the Garden of Eden. Consciously blocking out all problems and worries, she was determined to enjoy every moment and in later years, looked back on that interval as the happiest period of her life. "Dal Lake has myriads of reflections surrounded by green mountains against the blue sky filled with clouds through which one could glimpse snow capped giants," she noted with pleasure.

Anna delighted in the small houseboat with its tiny rooms and the separate, attached kitchen boat, where their cook-bearer lived with his family. Early in the mornings a boy would arrive in a small shikara filled with the most beautiful flowers. "Double dahlias of fantastic hues and sizes, sweet smelling carnations and roses of hundreds of varieties and colours. He went from houseboat to houseboat; selling bunches of his gorgeous wares for just a few annas."

After breakfast Anna and Sheikh would go off sketching and painting, rowed by one of the cook's boys. Anna noted that even in the earthly paradise they still had to economize, using oil paints thinned with turpentine, and painting with sable brushes on paper. "The results were as detailed as miniature paintings or the work of Rosetti and his friends of the Romantic School." It was so pleasant and relaxing that Anna wished they could glide on like that forever. "Sheikh also relaxed. Day by day I could see the tense lines on his face softening, and the nervous twitch of his shoulders gradually decreasing in intensity,

becoming less and less noticeable." Her lyrical description of the lake almost captured the visual imagery of the Romantic poets: "In the evenings, the golden sunset turned to crimson and warm brown glowing clouds edged with brilliant bands of silver-gold with glittering sequins. Soon the rich blue night covered the warm reds and the clouds became lighter, a greyer tint against the dark, quiet sky." After sun-set, Sheikh and Anna lit coloured glass oil lamps, which gave a soft and restful glow, and enjoyed each other's company, without the intrusion of other people. Anna looked back upon this first holiday together as a delayed honeymoon.

One morning Anna and Sheikh received a visitor, Malik Ahmed Hassan, who was the Principal of Islamia College at the time. He invariably spent his holidays in Kashmir, a place he loved and knew well. With Malik Sahib they visited the numerous houseboat shops and Anna was full of admiration for the beautiful hand-crafted objects. In her journal, she described fine engraved silver tea-sets, finger bowls shaped like the graceful lotus or the traditional five-pointed chinar leaf, and beautiful, carved walnut wood pieces, polished and fine grained. Anna Molka particularly liked the lacquer work and papier-mâché articles, including painted knitting needle cases that she bought to hold her paint brushes. One of their excursions took them down winding lanes to the places where the craftsmen worked and Anna Molka was stunned by the poverty of their surroundings. "They were sitting, bent over small, narrow flat looms, using real gold and silver thread wound on the smallest of shuttles;

starved bodies handling gold and silver. I bought presents for my family in England and friends in Lahore, but I could not bear to surround myself with these beautiful crafts for through them I would continue to see the pathos and poverty of the craftsmen."

The Director of Education in Kashmir at that time was a Mr. Sayedain, whom Sheikh and Anna had met in Lahore. When they met once more at a houseboat dinner party, he requested Anna to conduct a month-long in-service training for women teaching primary and middle schools. Anna Molka was delighted to be of service and, at the same time, the generous honorarium was an enormous help with their holiday budget. The Inspector of Schools in Kashmir was a Miss Mahmuda, who had been educated in Lahore. She acted as Anna Molka's interpreter, and also attended the course to see if the teachers could implement what they were taught. Mahmuda was an intelligent, attractive young woman with whom Anna formed an excellent rapport. They discussed the budget available for materials and Anna decided to use only easily available materials to enable the teachers to continue the work with their students.

"We used a rough type of handmade, local Karnafuli paper and some powder colours used by women to dye their dupattas. There were no brushes at all, but we started with finger painting because flour and water were available for making the paste. Various powder colours were added, and someone contributed an earthenware pot and wooden spoon from their home, so we started a fire with wooden chips placed inside three bricks in the courtyard. We collected the little glazed bowls used for drinking tea and separated the different coloured pastes. It was a good beginning with everyone highly amused when I told them making paste was similar to cooking a mild pudding. The laughter that ensued brought about the relaxed and friendly atmosphere so necessary

for Art Teaching."

Anna was delighted to find that language was not a barrier, as she taught by example. Words were not necessary; the group gathered round as she spread out old newspapers to protect the table, and over them laid out the paper to be used as the surface for a picture. She dipped her fingers into the blue paste and within seconds, with a few flourishes she made a sky with twirling clouds. Fingers were cleaned with newspaper and then dipped into the green paste to make the grass, interspersed with earth of ochre and brown shades. Then hills, trees and brightly clothed figures and animals were added. Anna could not understand what was said in class, but the happy tones reassured her as she demonstrated paste-marbling, and designs of varying texture. During these sessions, Anna gave simple lectures including the importance of teaching art to children of all ages. A question-and-answer session ended each day, with Miss Mahmuda interacting between Anna Molka and the class. The dried paintings were then collected and stored away for the polishing process the next day.

Mahmuda procured a glass bottle, a paper-weight and some beeswax; and on pads of newspaper the pictures and designs were polished till they shone. Through her interpreter, Anna discussed the various waste materials that could be procured by the students from their homes for making toys and collage pictures: wire, newspaper, reels, cardboard etc. 'Paint brushes' were made by chewing twigs and hammering the chewed edge, then whittling the sides for a pointed brush. The beginning of the chewed part was bound with book binding thread. The stencil 'brush' was left round but bound in the same way. Cotton-wool dabbers were used to give a soft coloured effect. Using papier-mâché, modeling little animals in clay, abstract painting and basic design, were all included in the course, and Anna was impressed by the excellent masks, puppets, toys and plates

that came out of the class. At the end of the course, the teachers arranged an exhibition of their work under Anna's guidance. "Everyone was pleased with me, which made me pleased with myself".

On their return to Lahore, Anna Molka began to tire of the hectic social life. Often they had as many as forty visitors a day and she hardly had a chance to have a private conversation with her husband. Anna and Sheikh moved to Masson Road, and although friends still came, it was not as convenient for evening strollers as the previous location had been. For a couple of years Anna put up with the insects that feasted on her furniture and her meager wardrobe, but when small snakes started to appear another move was made. This

time they rented part of a bungalow on Jail road from where Anna would cycle to the university.

For the Summer vacation in 1943, Sheikh and Anna decided to take a painting holiday in the Dalhousie Hills. Anna Molka remembered that time as her last carefree experience.

"I have never seen such beautiful sun-sets as I saw in the Dalhousie Hills. I was young, in love with my husband, my painting and my work. I had no children or chains, and lived in a carefree bohemian way, perhaps all these things heightened my perception and my appreciation of God's magnificent creation, Nature. When one is young one always feels the future will be better. Had we not hope or if we knew the future, how many would have the courage to go on?"



Increasing responsibility

As the Department of Fine Arts expanded, Anna Molka took on three more staff members, Mrs. Nancy Lucas, whose husband was the Principal of the Forman Christian College, Miss Kahimkar, from the J.J. School of Art, Bombay, and an Austrian lady, Mrs. Sinha-Hirach, who was married to a Bengali artist. In 1944 classes in Fine Arts were introduced at the B.A. level, and two of Anna's brightest students were employed as demonstrators to assist with the Intermediate Classes. As the news spread that Fine Arts had become a subject in the University, a number of parents wanted their daughters to join the B.A. course, even if they had not taken Fine Art in Intermediate. It was then that Anna Molka introduced an entrance test to give a chance to the naturally talented. With the addition of new staff her responsibilities increased. There were personality clashes: Mrs. Sinha-Hirach was inclined to be temperamental, and sometimes offended Miss Kahimkar, though when in a good mood she was very keen to be helpful. She had mastered the technique of Indonesian Batik, which the girls learned with great interest, but generally they preferred to keep out of her way.

Anna Molka was jubilant when she finally succeeded in persuading the Education Department to introduce Art Teaching as a subject for teachers under training. In spite of her heavy schedule, she was very keen to start art education classes at Lady MacLagan Training College, which she regarded as pioneer work. Though the Vice-Chancellor initially expressed reservations that

the double workload might prove to be too much for Anna, he was finally persuaded by her enthusiasm and gave his permission.

Aware that the men's training college had a drawing master, she was determined to get equitable treatment for the ladies' college as well. There Anna taught students training to become teachers of school subjects at all levels. To assist her, she employed trainees from the Fine Arts department of the University to lecture on art teaching. Anna had not relinquished her dream of an art syllabus as a basic subject in the school curriculum. By holding exhibitions of her students' work at the end of the year and inviting students of the men's college to view them, she hoped to bring about a realization that having proper training in art activities for schools was essential.

By the fourth year, the Department had a total of 200 students, counting all the Intermediate students and those in the first and second year B.A. classes. It was the final year for the B.A. students and for the Intermediate second year students. Anna Molka referred to her fourth year students as her 'pioneers' and told them they were setting the standard for Fine Arts as a subject. The girls pointed out that for a vast subject such as Fine Arts, one needed to study full time to achieve a real standard. They elaborated on their problems, how they had to study many other subjects in their various colleges, as well as waste time traveling to and

from the University. A number of students were eager to continue in a Masters' programme, and though Anna Molka was very keen to launch M.A. classes in Fine Arts, she lacked sufficiently qualified staff. The girls had to study other subjects to earn an M.A. degree, but Anna promised to take some of them on as part time teachers for the continuously growing Intermediate Classes.

Delighted though she was to see Fine Arts growing in popularity, Anna Molka knew that most of her girls would get married after the Intermediate or B.A. Examinations, and those few who went on to the M.A. would take it in other subjects. It was a continuing source of outrage. "Where were the chances of getting my students qualified to take teaching posts in colleges or universities when they were not allowed to study for an M.A. in the Fine Arts. It was men who made their careers here and women in the home. Had I to keep on churning out girls for the marriage market? Certainly the fashion now decreed that Fine Arts and Music were a must for the best marriages. There was only one solution I could think of, and that was to try for a University College of Fine Arts". Anna became fired with the idea of a separate college for the Fine Arts Department, surmising that there would then be less interference from those who were violently opposed to the Department.

When the ever supportive Vice-Chancellor, Mian Afzal Hussein, left the University to become Chairman of the Sugar Cane Board, Anna Molka felt almost orphaned. It was he who had initiated the Fine Arts and Music Departments and so had special interest in these subjects. He was always helpful and understanding of the various difficulties of the Department and Anna trusted his judgment. She was not at all in tune with the new Vice-Chancellor, but after a short while he left the University and Anna Molka was made head of the Department of Fine Arts. There she

remained until 1972.

While all the changes were taking place, Anna Molka started suffering dizzy spells. She attributed her feelings to worry and stress, but discovered she was suffering from acute high blood pressure. On the doctor's orders, she had to cut down on her workload so one of the brightest of the BA students, Miss Anwar Rashid, took Anna's place in teaching at the Lady MacLagan College. After a year, Anwar passed on the responsibility to two others of the University art students, while she joined Anna Molka in the University Department. A follow up visit to the doctor surprised Anna with the news that she was to be a mother and life was never going to be the same again. Kind Nancy Lucas took charge. As the University was to close for three months reopening in October, she contacted the Mission Hospital at Landpur, Missouri and arranged for Anna to have her confinement there. Sheikh Ahmed with a friend in tow made a trip in advance and organized a cottage where Anna, accompanied by good friends Professor and Mrs. Qazi with their daughter and Anna's faithful servant, Allah Ditta, would stay. Sheikh decided to stay in Lahore with his students and join Anna later on. Anna Molka confessed to feeling terrified of having a baby. She knew absolutely nothing about babies and desperately wanted her mother.

"The views from the cottage were beautiful, the panorama of mountains against the sky and the lush greens were so soothing after the dust of Lahore. Following on the strain of a double job, and cycling to and from work in this condition, I should have felt more relaxed. The calm of the hill station and being able to just sit around and walk slowly surrounded by such beauty, should have been ideal. But I knew the tension was mounting; tension due to the war and worrying about the family in England, tension due to Sheikh's attitude of not wanting a family and not coming to be with me at such a time, and worry

that the hospital was at least five miles away over hills and dales."

Mrs. Lucas had earlier taken Anna to meet Dr. Robertson, a tall, gentle woman, and have a look at the small, homely hospital wards. There Anna met some of the English nurses and enjoyed the view from the hospital, which was situated at a height of over seven thousand feet high. She wrote numerous letters to her mother in England, but the war was raging and none of them reached their destination.

Anna had a number of health problems, including persistent high blood pressure, and for most of the time she felt quite ill. The loving care given her by Mrs. Lucas and the Qazi, was extremely comforting and Anna never forgot their kindness. When Anna was admitted to the hospital, she discovered that Dr. Robertson painted watercolours as a hobby. She was kind enough to lend Anna her sketching block and paints. The nurses would prop Anna up in bed with pillows, and she sketched her ward-mates, the vases of flowers besides their beds, and the view from the open windows. Anna's fluctuating health decided the doctors to induce the baby, and a telegram was sent to Sheikh urging him to come at once and give his permission to operate if necessary. After three days of treatment Anna was wheeled into the labour room, where at 12:30 am on the 21st September, Anna gave birth to a baby girl who was later named Zarah Mariam. By this time Sheikh had arrived. "The nurse tried to put the baby into Sheikh's arms but he backed away, and when he could back no further, he ran out of the ward, out of the hospital and immediately left Missouri and went down to Lahore..."

In Lahore Sheikh did his best. He had the flat cleaned and prepared for his wife and baby, bought a couple of books on baby care which Anna frantically studied, and he found a source of supply for hard-to-get Glaxo Baby Milk. Anna

worried about the baby's health, and at this time she developed the back trouble that was to plague her for the rest of her life. Many medicines were to be administered and opinions proffered to treat the excruciating pain until, much later, her condition was finally diagnosed as osteoarthritis of the spine. Anna's younger daughter Tahira related how often in childhood her mother would close herself in her room at the end of her working day and sob with pain.

The baby continued to thrive and Anna Molka returned her attention to the problems of the Department. Sheikh's Mother came to help look after the baby while Anna Molka was busy with the University. As a cure for Anna's back she had filled two huge earthenware vessels with a mixture she had made called '*Kumar Khas*' meaning 'back strengthener'. Included in the ingredients were sugar, ghee, almonds, and lots of other tasty components. Anna Molka owned that she found the taste so irresistible that she took some out to chew whenever she passed the jars. Her volatile emotional state soon caused her to consume the lot and the result was she began to put on weight. Her clothes hardly fit her and from that time on she abandoned dresses and wore shalwar kamiz. Anna never again regained her twenty-seven inch waist, and no amount of walking or dieting could ever reduce her to her original weight of 133 lbs.

Anna Molka was very vocal on the subject of the system of early marriage arrangements affecting her students. She was furious when girls with potential were taken out of the University before finishing their course. "As soon as a match was found for the student, she was just whisked away. Marriage was the career for women not education." Anna Molka's feelings on this subject were so strongly expressed that students, terrified of her reactions, would often get married without informing her. One of the teachers from those early days related how one young married

colleague never informed Anna that she was expecting a baby. Though physical changes took place, Anna appeared oblivious, and the young woman, growing larger and larger, carried on with her usual duties. Finally, the day came when, leaving an outdoor landscape class, she headed straight home where her son was born.

As time passed baby Zarah grew into a lovely, lively baby. When vacation time came, Dr. and Mrs. Lucas invited Anna, Zarah and Sheikh, to join them at the college holiday camp situated at Naseem Bagh, in Kashmir. There, they pitched their tent in a beautiful spot and Anna set up Zarah's play-pen under a shady Chinar tree. Unwilling to leave the baby, Anna confined her painting to the forest around them. Working with oils on paper, she sketched and painted the beautiful Chinar trees and the pretty Kashmiri girls sweeping up the fallen leaves. During that holiday they visited Shalimar Gardens where Anna painted with watercolours, capturing joyous moments of people enjoying picnics among the flowers, the water fountains and the trees.

Back in Lahore, Anna's troubles crowded back. "How to make Fine Arts a fully fledged University subject of M.A. and get the huge Intermediate and B.A. Classes to be run by local or mossafil colleges, or to start a University College of Fine Art.? No matter how I fought for the subject I could make no headway. If most of my students made marriage a career, where was I to get qualified staff?" Meanwhile Anna Molka's day-to-day domestic problems continued. Money was scarce, Sheikh contributed nothing to the running expenses of the home. He spent less time at home now and lived the life of a bohemian artist. Anna received a transport allowance of twenty rupees a month, which did not cover her expenses so she usually cycled or, if there was time, she walked to and from the University. "I really had not learned cycling properly. Luckily in those days there was little traffic about and I used to

get on the cycle and never get off till I reached the University. I just said 'Sorry', as I sailed passed the open-mouthed policeman on duty."

When Sheikh landed a job at Simla Hills Information and Broadcasting, Anna was left alone with the baby. "Off he went to stay in the Grand Hotel in bachelor accommodation leaving me to cope alone with the University Department, baby Zarah and high blood-pressure". Luckily Anna had very kind neighbors who were happy to keep an eye on Zarah till Anna returned from work each day. In summer the classes started very early from 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and from 8:30 a.m. till 10:00 a.m., so she was able to be home in time to supervise baby Zarah's lunch and her afternoon rest. In the evenings Anna would take her for a stroll in her pram. Friends continued to be in and out of the house and tried to be generally useful.

When the summer holidays arrived, Sheikh came down from the hills to take his family to Simla, where they could enjoy three months of cool weather. Anna managed to do some painting but the old, carefree days were over. She wrote of the hullabaloo of finding a large, baboon seated at the dining table one day eating a banana. Anna screamed, and from her account, it is difficult to make out who was more terrified, she or the baboon. He immediately exited through the nearest window, and after that incident the verandha windows were kept firmly closed. Several of Anna's students were holidaying in Simla and they often dropped in to see her. Baby Zarah was happy playing with a local Ayah whom Anna asked to join them for a while in Lahore. She made plans to return to Lahore a week before joining the University on October 1st. Anna needed time to prepare for her lectures, and with Zarah happily occupied and a reliable servant in residence, she was able to work in peace.

The peaceful interlude soon ended, with the

arrival of Sheikh, who was tense and angry. Apparently he had walked out of his job after an argument with his colleague, who had been a friend of Sheikh's from the London days. Sheikh's professional pride cost him two and a half months salary as he left Simla without bothering to collect the money he was due. "He never bothered to collect his salary even in Lahore, because he never gave me any housekeeping money." Anna Molka had hoped to concentrate on the problems of Fine Arts, but it was a difficult time with Sheikh upset and furious about the Simla fiasco. Then, to her great dismay, little Zarah caught whooping cough from a neighbor's child. Anna was distraught, all other preoccupations pushed aside. Looking back Anna Molka said, "I shudder

to remember this time." They sent for Sheikh's mother to help, and gradually Zarah recovered.

In the months preceding Partition, the political atmosphere around them was becoming increasingly fraught with tension. Anna Molka would arrive early at the University and find anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan posters put up, and she had to pull them all down before the regular students attended. She lectured her students repeatedly about the importance of concentrating on their education, and leaving the politicians to manage their own affairs. "I requested them to express their feelings through paintings not propaganda, but things were happening around them and my voice did not count."



Violence in the streets

Anna Molka had asked Anwar Rashid (later Mrs. Anwar Afzal), to take over from her at the Lady MacLagen Training College in 1945. Anwar, who was born in Sarghoda in 1923, had been one of the second batch of Anna Molka's students at the Punjab University, joining in 1941, and graduating in 1944. Through the years, the two of them became close friends. Both Anna Molka's daughters remember Anwar as a daily visitor to the house. At that time her father was Deputy Commissioner in Lahore; when he was transferred to Murree and wanted his family to move with him, Anna pleaded with Anwar not to go. Without her, their efforts to start art in schools would come to naught. Instead, Anwar moved in with Anna Molka, who promised her family that she would look after her well. Both were seriously dedicated women, and deeply motivated. Though they were complete opposites in temperament, Anwar was quite unfazed by Anna's occasional outbursts, and Anna took great comfort from Anwar's quiet good sense.

It was a time of great political unrest; tension was growing daily and the atmosphere became increasingly disturbing. Anna Molka's Muslim servant, who had always slept outdoors with his friends, a Sikh and a Hindu from the neighbouring houses, now felt unsafe at night and slept inside the house. Previously the three men had enjoyed chatting and joking with each other long into the night; now he feared being knifed by one of them as he slept. There was mistrust everywhere. Curfews were imposed but according to Anna Molka, these curfews added to the troubles.

"One night when we had a curfew in Jail Road, a district of Hindus and Sikhs, Mrs. Gilani and my family were the only Muslims living in the road. We heard the marching of Muslims from Rajghar, a nearby place that had no curfew, and we felt that our last days had come for no-one in a communal rage of reprisal was going to ascertain that one or two families in a huge Hindu area were not Hindus."

Anna kept a penknife handy to defend them, and she and Anwar discussed defensive action. Eventually they were forced to laugh, if somewhat hysterically, for the knife was blunt and Anwar small and slight in build. When Anna asked her mother-in-law to go down the lane between the houses and see if she could spot anything, the old lady yelled indignantly, "What, you want me to be killed?" While Sheikh's mother and Anwar prayed, Anna nursed the baby and then miraculously the fearful noise and shouts receded and grew fainter, possibly due to police intervention. Life in Lahore had changed, mistrust was rampant, and those who could leave for a safer place did so. The University closed and Anna bid a tearful farewell to her departing Hindu students. They urged Anna to join them in India where, they said, the climate would be more conducive to art. Anna Molka hoped they would meet again one day but they never did.

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with her Bengali husband, and the Controller of Examinations, Mr. G. Singh, had been murdered. Only Anna's Christian peon was left. Sheikh's Mother decided to move to Rawalpindi, and Anna Molka, Zahra and Anwar, went off to join Anwar's family in Murree, where Anna Molka was able to rent a small apartment. Sadly all the beautiful bungalows belonging to Hindu families had been burnt by the local people. Anna and Anwar set up their easels and painted scenes of the burnt houses in a background of hills and sky. Anna painted the landscape, hill girls with their silver jewellery, and the coolies carrying heavy loads up and down the steps to the lower bazaar. "I painted at Pindi Point, the way down to Gora Galli, and at Kashmir Point. I painted mist on the mountains from above the Post Office, and in all I painted twenty-eight Murree pictures that memorable year".

On the 13th August 1947, Anna was 30 years old. She spent the day painting and weeping. "Like so many others, I felt life was finished when you left your twenties."

In her journal she wrote about the terrible carnage continuing in the country.

"Although we were far away from Lahore, the drama of the partition was here also. Buses and vans full of Sikhs and Hindus left Murree for safer zones, but only the drivers were left alive to bring back the vehicles, with the bodies of the passengers hacked to pieces."

The University usually reopened in October and Anna Molka, unaccustomed to such a long period of inactivity, was bored and restless in the Hill Station. Sheikh had stayed in Lahore, and it was a relief to receive notification that the University would re-open in November. Her thoughts were very much with the Fine Arts Department and the future of Fine Art in the new country. Anna Molka's dream of a University College of Fine Arts was gone. She was aware that out of her 200 students, only 18 were Muslim girls and

there was no guarantee that they were still in residence in Lahore. Anna worried about the art library, with its few precious books collected with difficulty and treasured, but her desire to propagate art in educational institutions remained strong.

Mr. and Mrs. Rashid were making arrangements for Anwar's marriage, so she was unable to return to Lahore with Anna. It was still dangerous to travel and there was a curfew in Lahore, but Anna, Mrs. Alys Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and Mrs. Mahmud Ali Qasuri who were all in Murree, decided to return to Lahore together, albeit without permission to travel from their husbands. "We reached the train without any mishap and just prayed that our journey would be a lucky one. I shall never forget the horror I felt when the train slowed, every hair on my body must have stood up. We just looked at each other, grim-mouthed in silence. The train recovered speed and we breathed deeply with relief."

At the Lahore railway station, the three women found a space to sit on the floor, spreading a bedroll for the children to lie on. Anna recorded her shock and horror at seeing piles of dead bodies covered in white sheets lying all around. Alys Faiz was determined to get them all home and she managed to put a call through to her husband the renowned poet, Faiz Ahmed Faiz. He somehow arranged curfew passes for the husbands to collect their families from the station, but there was no going home that night. They all stayed at Faiz and Alys's house and Anna reported that the men were furious at the risks their wives had taken. After having seen the piled up bodies on the platforms, the women realized why. "We were most grateful to Faiz and Alys and gave weary but heartfelt thanks." Further shocks awaited poor Anna, as she discovered she had no home to go to. Sheikh had given up the part-bungalow they rented in Jail Road, and had taken their belongings to a house on Warris Road. The



32-A, *Queen's Road, Lahore.*

previous tenants had left, so Sheikh and his friend Hassan had decided to share the bungalow and eventually buy it. Anna had deep misgivings; she doubted these plans would work out, but was too weary and dejected to give voice to her fears.

Anna found Lahore much changed. "It was a colossal migration. Those who lived to tell the tale made our blood run cold. Most of the younger men who had accompanied their old parents and grandparents across borders had been killed and to rehabilitate old people, young women and children at refugee camps was a great problem. Many local people worked at the camps, assisting the doctors and helping with organization, collecting clothes and medicine, bedding and money."

At the University, the new East Wing that had

accommodated 200 students was now empty. Only six of the eighteen Muslim students had returned. The Music Department was without teachers or students, so Anna Molka made her office in the front music room. She noted that the narrow-minded element in the University was delighted the Music department had closed and wished that the Fine Arts department would follow suit. "They told me to my face they wished I had been killed like Mr. G. Singh, and then they could have closed down the department. The syllabus was scrutinized and all mention of figurative work was eliminated. Even the History of Art syllabus was altered. I was informed that only Muslim Art and Architecture was to be taught, no Buddhist or Hindu Art or Architecture. It was also decided that only Landscape, Still-life and Design could be taught in the practicals, there would be no figure drawing or sculpture. I was very upset and felt that this was going

backwards instead of forwards, but the times were such that I could not protest. I had to obey to save the Department from being closed down."

Anna Molka carried on with six students till the time new students could be admitted. When students of the Department of Islamiyat called them names, Anna Molka asked her students to ignore the taunts and concentrate seriously on their work. They were the pioneers of Fine Art in Pakistan, she told them, and had an important role to play in the progress of art in the new country. Since she considered life-drawing as the basis of art, Anna conducted classes with the students sketching her or each other. She felt it wiser not to take them outdoors for sketching at that time, but allowed them to do a little clay modeling, albeit unofficially. That year the examination work eschewed images of figures.

Now that there were fewer students, Anna Molka felt she could manage advanced teaching and drew up an M.A. syllabus. She explained to the Academic Council of the Punjab University that students needed to have higher qualifications before they could teach in colleges, but their answer to her was that she needed more staff. Again she argued that it was impossible to have more staff without the opportunity to qualify, as at that time, she was the only one who was qualified. She also proposed that boys should be admitted to the department. At all University meetings Anna Molka spoke up strongly for Art, braving the displeasure of over sixty members who were against the subject. A lone voice, she argued, shouted and made her presence felt, but it was to be several years before her proposals were accepted. Anna Molka was desperately in need of help in teaching, as many of the women's colleges outside Lahore wished to start the subject as soon as possible.

Another problem arose when the department

became popular with wealthy families wishing their daughters to attend art classes before being married off. These influential families procured recommendations for admission from highly placed officials and the Department was forced to take casual students. Anna was irate but helpless. These students joined for between three to six months, they did not wish to study the History and Theory of Art, and took practicals only. They were irregular in attendance and drifted in and out of the University disturbing the serious students. Anna could do nothing but work around them.

Mian Afzal Hussain was again the Vice Chancellor of the University, and marking Anna's attempts to start music lessons in the evening, called her in and advised her to 'stop asking for trouble'. Anna took the opportunity of discussing the problems of the department, and the Vice Chancellor advised a compromise for the time being. He agreed to help establish a Post-Graduate Diploma in Fine Arts that would continue for one year after the BA. Fine Arts. It was planned as a half-way house to an M.A. degree, and the Vice-Chancellor asked Anna Molka to draw up a syllabus for that one year. At a later date, those who had qualified could complete another year to procure their full MA. Degree, whenever the subject was introduced at a Master's level. Anna wasted no time in setting to work to structure the course. She would continue teaching European Painting and the History of Art, and introduce a three month course within this Diploma for Art teaching at all levels. It was her intention that when a full-fledged M.A. degree course was started, the three-month course would be expanded to a full B.Ed. degree.

The syllabus completed, the Post-Graduate Diploma of Fine Arts was introduced from 1948. A Professor of History, Mr. Aziz, had written a number of books on Muslim Culture and Anna Molka was delighted when he agreed to undertake

a special study and teach Muslim painting. The Curator of the Lahore Museum, Mr. Malik Shams, agreed to join the faculty on his retirement, and Muslim Architecture was taught by Mr. Wali Ullah Khan, Superintendent of the Lahore Fort. Sheikh Ahmed felt that if the standard of the Post-Graduate Diploma was to be higher than the existing BA. Degree course, the students would require extra coaching in drawing and painting, as the time spent on lectures in the University took away from their practical hours. He opened a coaching studio on the Mall and some of the university students joined in the evening as private students. At that time Sheikh, who had joined the Mayo School of Art as Lecturer in Art History, was appointed Vice-Principal. As usual, he did not get on with the Principal and every day Anna Molka was forced to listen to a tirade against him. Sheikh Ahmed had acquired, and resigned, several interesting jobs during their marriage, but he was getting more and more intolerant and opinionated. He invariably ended up leaving his post without picking up his salary. Anna Molka was initially very supportive of his actions but as the years went by, the children came and she remained the sole financial support of the family, including Sheikh's mother, her patience wore thin and she felt he should be contributing more to his family.

Sheikh's friends continued to find him very entertaining, and as time went by he spent most of his time out of the house with them or his students, and taking little responsibility for the home. Anna began to view him in an increasingly critical light. Meanwhile sharing the Warris Road house with Hassan was also beginning to present problems. He objected to visitors as his wife observed purdah, and this became a constant irritant. Sheikh had gone to Kashmir with a friend, so Anna Molka decided that to save the friendship with Hassan, she would move house while Sheikh was away, so that there would be no arguments.

Hassan managed to find two houses available, both in a dilapidated condition but one of them, 32A Queens Road, was situated in a quiet cul-de-sac. It was a small house that appeared to have once been the guesthouse for the main residence. There were three rooms and a large garage and all around the house ran a verandah. Anna immediately recognized the house with a pang as the bungalow that the music teacher Shama Zutchi had lived in and remembered visiting her there for tea. As it was, throughout the house the electric wires had been ripped out, the fans were missing from every room, and the water pump had been stolen. Still, Anna Molka decided this would be their home, and set to work to put it right. The electrician who looked after the University was called and he re-wired the whole house. When Sheikh returned, he put up brick walls on the verandah to create another room. All the unnecessary doors from the inside rooms were removed and used to make bookshelves for their large book collection. The rent of the house, paid to the government, was fifty-five rupees per month and Anna Molka could just about afford it.

Since 1942, the Department of Fine Arts had been holding annual art exhibitions of its staff and student's work. To support her Department and its activities, Anna Molka looked to the distinguished artists of Lahore. "I approached both Mr. Abdur Rahman Chughtai and Ustad Allah Bux, who are milestones in the history of Pakistan's art, and they both cooperated with me in an endeavor to keep art activities alive." Anna's objective was to facilitate artists and propagate art throughout Pakistan. The All Punjab Art Exhibitions, to which all artists of Pakistan were welcome to contribute their work, became annual events. "Mr. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, and Ustad Allah Bux, donated gold medals as prizes, and the University gave a Shield for the best painting of the year as well as a number of silver medals

and certificates.” Catalogues were published that included portrait photographs of the artists and their work, and short biographical sketches. These publications are now archival material, and in some instances are the only record of art activities taking place in those times.

Voices in the University were raised against the use of University funds for ‘outsiders’. It was at this point that Anna Molka realized the necessity of starting a Pakistan Arts Council. With Sheikh’s help she drew up a list of potential committee members and a list of proposed activities. They then approached the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Zafar-ul-Ahsan, and discussed the situation with him. “He was very keen on the idea of the Arts Council, and proposed that first a society of cultured people must be formed, and he pledged Rs.5,000 from official funds for publications.

Anna worked on plans for an Arts Council Association and organized an exhibition of students work at the University in December 1948. “Mr. Zafar-ul-Ahsan inaugurated the exhibition, and introduced the Pakistan Art Council Association. As well as Anna Molka and Sheikh, members included Abdur Rahman Chughtai, and his brother Dr. Abdullah Chughtai, Ustad Allah Bux, Mr. Shams, curator of the Lahore Museum, Dr. Aziz, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Dr. Taseer represented the writers and poets. My pioneers and new students attended the exhibition and lots of other cultured people of Lahore.”

While all this was happening Anna Molka was seven months pregnant with her second child. Her blood pressure had risen, and other health problems plagued her and, for these and various other reasons, she resigned from the Arts Council Committee. Tahira was born on February 17th 1949, and Anna’s old servant, Allah Ditta, returned from Bombay. Sheikh’s mother was again in residence so Anna felt confident that she could continue with the University work in

peace, but it was not to be. Sheikh’s mother and Allah Ditta became antagonists and every day they waited for Anna to come home to fill her ears with complaints. Then in would come Sheikh, full of complaints against the Mayo School. “My blood pressure gave me palpitations and my back gave me hell.”

Around this time Sheikh acquired an ancient, silver-coloured Rolls Royce. “It roared, it just reversed and one gallon of petrol was consumed. His hobby was to open it up every week-end and work on the engine. He had trained as an automobile and aviation engineer after all, but I would have preferred him to paint.” Sheikh insisted that Anna be dropped at the university in the ‘monster’, though since he could not drive, one of the peons did the honours. Anna’s students told her they could hear the car coming from the time she left the house, and Tajjamal Hussain, then a young student, remembers her passing by in the car with her hair flying. “She was very pretty” he recalled. Sheikh’s new passion eventually waned, the car went and it was back to the bicycle.

Very often Anna Molka’s frustrations were to do with the language. She never mastered Urdu and the language problems continued. “Once I sent the peon to get a mattress for the life class model to pose upon. After ages the peon came back with a donkey. The word in Urdu for mattress and donkey is similar, but slightly differently pronounced. I told him he was a donkey! He then brought me a buffalo with a cart and also the ‘Gaddahwallah’ (owner). By that time my class was in hysterics with laughter. Three times I had used the word ‘gaddah’, and each time got a different item because of the slight difference in pronunciation’. After that experience, Anna always requested someone else to check whether she was understood. The problems of pronunciation continued but Anna said that Art was an international language.

Though so immersed in the problems of the Department, Anna Molka never neglected her children. Every year, on Zahra's birthday, Anna Molka threw a large party. The little girl attended the Cathedral School, and on that day her school friends, teachers, Anna's friends from the University were all invited. Sheikh's friends would bring their wives, many in purdah, who stayed happily inside with the other ladies. On Tahira's first birthday there was a similar event. "I had collected lots of masks from the cornflake packets at that time and every child was a monkey or a tiger or a lion, or a beautiful Pierrot or Pierrette. They wore colourful crepe paper hats that I had sewn on my machine, and I covered oranges and apples with silver and gold paper and hung them on a small tree in the garden. I was always too busy to have functions during the year, so on these occasions; I invited nearly everyone I knew. Since there were no relatives, my children were delighted play among the large number of guests."

The principal and teachers of the Cathedral School

were keen to include art classes in the school curriculum, so Anna Molka and her students taught classes that were attended by teachers as well as the children. In this way, Anna felt the teachers could be trained to continue the classes when she and her student assistants left. She also took her students to the Lady MacLagen School, where they taught in Urdu. The children had lots of fun and Anna's students gained valuable experience. Anna laughingly narrated an incident when three tearful children reported their papier-mâché toys had been stolen from the yard where they were laid out to dry in the sun. Ultimately it was discovered that the crows found the paste of flour and water very tasty, and carried the pieces off. After that, the work to be dried was left inside, near a closed but sunny window.

For the end of the year functions, exhibitions of the children's work were arranged and Anna Molka always remembered one particular child who showed tremendous talent creating animals out of *papier-mâché*.





Annual Exhibition Punjab University.

Not enough hours in the day...

When the Post-Graduate Diploma in Fine Arts was instituted in 1948 as a half-way house towards an M.A., timings had to be changed to allow for extra study. Anna Molka had initially considered extending the hours of the department until 6:00 p.m., on par with the Science faculty, but since the students were all girls and their parents felt it was too late for them to be out, the timings were extended only up to 4:00 p.m.. To earn their Diplomas, students were asked to write a thesis on subjects related to the History of Art or Architecture, as well as gain the required

teaching practice and attend lectures. After Tahira's birth in 49, Anna's bouts of ill health and personal problems, combined with the responsibilities of the Department, the children and the home, left her feeling drained and depressed. From all accounts, it seems she was almost on the brink of a breakdown and in urgent need of rest after nursing both children through chicken pox followed by measles.

In a mood of desperation, she wrote to her mother in England, asking if she might come home for



Anna Molka with Zahra and Tahira.

a rest and whether her mother could help look after the children for a while. The answer, when it came, was written by her elder sister Pearl who took her to task. 'You chose the life you wanted', she wrote. 'You married the man of your choice. Mother raised her own five children and is now too old and tired to raise yours. Please don't worry her with your problems.' Anna was shocked by her sister's acerbity. Some time later she received a letter from her mother explaining that she had undergone an eye operation at the time Anna's letter had arrived, and in consequence had been unable to read or write. Mrs. Bridger pleaded with Anna not to be angry with Pearl. Anna decided that she had better try to pull herself together and get on with her life. The rift between Anna and Pearl eventually healed, then news came that sister Rhoda was in hospital with serious health problems. Anna was informed that no-one, including Rhoda, was to tell Mummy about it. Anna began to worry that she was not

being told the complete news of what was happening with her family in England.

When hot summer months of May and June came, Anna found that cycling home in the heat of the afternoon sapped her strength. One dreadful day remained etched in her memory for the rest of her life. It was particularly hot that afternoon when she arrived home for lunch as usual. There the girl's ayah, who had a small son with her, apologetically reported that the postman had handed the boy a blue airmail letter and he had mislaid it. The household went on a hunt for it, and just as Anna was about to begin lunch, the ayah hurried in carrying a black-edged, torn and crumpled airmail letter.

"I went cold when I saw the black border, and read the letter through a storm of blood rushing through my head. It was from the brother of one of my students who had written from England:

a condolence letter on the death of my mother." Anna, in a state of shock, left the table and clutching the letter locked herself in her studio where a large portrait of her mother hung. She sat before it weeping, shattered by the news of her mother's death received from a stranger. "Ten years ago, when I left England, Sheikh had promised to take me home to see her. He had promised so many things but never kept his promises. Pearl stopped me from going back to see her. I was beside myself and had given way completely." Sheikh tapped on the door and Anna screamed at him to go away. "I don't know how long I stayed in my studio locked away from everyone, lying face down on the floor and hammering with my hands and drumming with my feet on the cold cement and weeping." Anna wrote to Pearl and her brother Harold remonstrating with them, and Harold replied that neither he nor Pearl had had the courage to write and tell her. Up till then, neither had they informed their sister Rhoda who was still in hospital. Anna was devastated and deeply mourned her loss. "Hundreds of ways she had lived with me and continued to do so."

Life carried on with its problems, and Anna was immersed in the children, the domestic routine, the University, teaching, lecturing, projecting art and arranging exhibitions. Whenever possible she studied and wrote, and painted. "The talent in my hands and the understanding in my mind gave me utmost confidence for University teaching and propagating art. Administration and teaching were a pleasure. But in the home, my ignorance of cooking, and knowing nothing of bringing up children, made me a nervous wreck. Sheikh was just as useless, but he escaped out of the house and stayed with his students at his studio or at the Coffee House with his artist and poet group far into the night. Sheikh continued to fume against the Principal of the Mayo School and tried to incite the students to march against him. I warned him

this was not the way. He quarreled with everyone servants, colleagues, and officials. He quarreled with those with whom I had to deal."

Sheikh was hardly at home and never saw his children. Very disturbing rumours started to reach Anna, his friends reported that they took Sheikh to task about the way he was carrying on, but he would not listen. Anna's students who attended his classes at the Mall studio, also had stories to tell and she felt humiliated. There was much bitterness now and daily arguments. Anna's nerves were stretched to breaking point but in retrospect she mused: "I see now that if there had been a relative or friend to advise and keep the peace, or put me in a nursing home for a rest, we might have controlled the situation. As it was her thoughts turned to England, where she longed to visit her mother's grave. "I felt we could come back to an organized life without Sheikh's so-called friends."

In 1951, Anna got to know Elizabeth Belneaves, a visitor to Lahore. She was an artist and well qualified from Edinburgh School of Art, Scotland. She had written and illustrated books on her travels in the northern regions of Pakistan, and Anna felt that she would be the ideal person to replace her while she took a break. Elizabeth agreed to delay returning home to Scotland, and to take over during Anna's absence. On the strength of this Anna Molka applied for one years leave of absence, giving Mrs. Elizabeth Belneave's name as her replacement. Anna was determined to go yet she dreaded the journey before her; the long train journey to Karachi where they would board the ship for England, and the voyage home. Zarah was six years old, Tahira only eighteen months and Anna wondered how she would manage transferring luggage to the ship, carrying papers, hand-luggage and the children. "Sheikh refused to take us to Karachi, so our family friend, Hassan, who had business in Karachi, kindly saw us to the ship."

A stranger in the land

As the Polish Liner gradually moved away from the Karachi Docks, the loud speakers filled the decks with music. Anna heard the words of a popular song of the time with tears streaming down her face. 'My heart cries for you, please come back to me.' Tahira was in her arms, Zarah holding on to her skirt, and Anna Molka felt her heart was in shreds. She remembered her early days as a romantic, starry eyed young bride, arriving in India with such high hopes, and as she wept for the loss of her dreams and her love, she felt a complete failure. Always a bad traveler, she was horribly sea-sick for days, but the journey acted as balm to her overstretched nerves. As she slowly recovered, the stewards kept an eye on the children and when she was well enough to move about, she found her fellow passengers a friendly bunch of people. The children were happy, and Anna relaxed for the first time in years.

They docked at Liverpool in the pouring rain. Anxiously Anna went to the rails and looking down saw a solitary figure shielded by an umbrella, it was Pearl. They called down and waved and Pearl waved back. She was a busy career woman with a life of her own, but from all accounts she tried her best to help the little family settle down. Alone for the first time in her life, initially Anna was to find life in London challenging. Pearl had found her a five roomed, furnished flat and paid the rent for several weeks in advance, telling Anna, 'You are used to space in Pakistan', but Anna wondered how she would manage the housework. Pearl had put essential

crockery, cutlery and cooking pots in the flat, with a gas stove and a small refrigerator. As an 'advance' birthday present, she gave Anna a portable radio to keep her company, and promised to have a phone put in the apartment. The rationing of food and other essentials was still in existence in England in 1951, so Pearl arranged ration cards for food and for coal, and pointed out the market nearby for shopping.

Buying the groceries Anna had surprises in store. Eggs were rationed to one per week for each person and sugar, tea, meat and butter were all rationed and doled out in small portions. Anna gave the rations to the children and ate a lot of bread which didn't help her weight problems. She found the shopkeepers very friendly, the butcher advised her to buy steak to make stew, which she did and the children ate it for a week. There were queues for all foodstuffs and Anna noted how she stood in line for an hour to buy one banana. She was bemused by the unfamiliar food available, tins of dried eggs and whale meat steaks, rabbit and horse-meat, and people lined up for ages to buy these items which she couldn't bring herself to try. Anna found it very cold in the flat and bought bundles of wood to light a fire, and eke out the coal, but she was unable to get a blaze going. The woman in the general store told her use paper, wood and coal and to sprinkle it with kerosene before lighting. Apparently amazed at Anna's ineptitude, she put her hands on her hips, stared at Anna and asked her where she came from. Meanwhile, Pearl phoned numerous agencies and found Carmen, a Spanish

girl staying in England to learn the language, and who was willing to help out for her keep. Carmen cheerfully moved in with the family and helped with the children and house work. Anna had just managed to get part of her salary for the year transferred, and translated into sterling, it was hardly adequate to support them in London, and so Pearl helped out a lot.

The first priority on Anna's agenda was to visit her mother's grave situated in a Jewish Cemetery some distance out of London. Taking directions from Pearl, Anna set out by train with the children, buying flowers for her mother's grave, red roses and her mother's favourite pink and white carnations. Anna had forgotten that in Jewish cemeteries there are no flowers or trees, and she was very disturbed by the austere, barren cement and marble coldness. With her little children clinging to her, Anna wept as she sat by the grave side and read prayers from the Quran. Years later, ill and confined to bed, she described this experience in a poem:

*...It was a nightmare town
Avenues and streets of cement and marble
With short grass between.
There were no trees or flowers
No shady bowers in which to sit and mourn
No urn in which to put
The sweet scented tall red roses
And the pink and white carnations you loved.
I sat at the foot of your grave
And read prayers from the Quran
And wept ...*

Pearl and Rhoda invited their father to meet Anna and the children and they held their breath wondering about the outcome, but Anna and her father fell in to each other's arms reconciled and overcome by tears. Both had suffered much in the intervening years. Anna's father had given up the family house and moved into a hostel when he lost his wife. He had a friend Addie, a

lady of his own age whose fiancé was killed in the war and so had never married. Sam and Addie often acted as baby-sitters to the children, Sam Bridger adored his grand-children and Anna noted that whenever they came, they would bring hair-ribbons and books and little treats for the children. Anna took the children out to parks and the zoo, and enrolled Zarah in a near-by school where she settled in and did well. As the family grew more adjusted, Anna arranged to do the rounds of galleries. She visited her old art schools and found numerous changes. At St. Martin's she was shocked and delighted to hear a voice call out, 'Molly Bridger', when she looked around there was her Graphic Design teacher, Mr. Flannigan, who greeted her warmly. Anna had a portfolio of her work in various media to show the galleries, but they were interested in viewing a collection of work of one style and theme. She met a number of people who were interested in the palette knife work, but realized she would have to work hard to prepare for an exhibition.

Once, in a mood of nostalgia, she made a trip to Sheikh's old studio in Fitzroy Street. There she walked up the three flights of stairs to the room where they had hidden their canvases through a skylight in a hollow place on the roof. She discovered that part of the roof had been destroyed during the war and subsequently rebuilt, there was nothing left of the past. To Anna at that time it seemed symbolic. Meanwhile letters were coming from Mrs. Anwar Afzal in Lahore, giving all the news. It seemed that Elizabeth Belneaves had stayed but a short while at the University, and Anwar was worried about the future of the department. In 1952, the Lahore College for Women opened an Art Department for their Intermediate Art students who were taught by Anna Molka's students. She urged Anna Molka to return to the university, but first Anna had work to do. Since her arrival in London, she had been receiving disturbing news from Lahore about Sheikh, and sadly concluded the marriage had



*Sam and Addie, wedding day, with family.
from right Pearl, Anna, bride and groom Harold, and guests Zarah in front with flowers.*

ended. Taking help from Pearl, Anna consulted a divorce lawyer and was informed that without Sheikh's presence in England, there could be no divorce. At night she lay awake, thinking about the future for herself and the girls, wondering how she could live in Pakistan without a man in the family. Finally, eager to return to her work in Lahore, she persuaded her father and Addie to get married, and make their home with her in Lahore. She felt her father would be able to tackle Sheikh, and his presence in the house would ensure stability. Anna wrote to Sheikh informing him of her father's plans, and asking him to get the house cleaned up and to arrange to have some food in house. Eventually Anna Molka and family arrived in Lahore on Christmas Eve, 24th December, 1952. Sheikh moved on to Karachi and began a new chapter in his life.

Sam and Addie Bridger, stayed with Anna in Lahore for almost a year, and were present when Anna's divorce from Sheikh came through. The Bridgers' witnessed Anna Molka's commitment to her work and were on hand when, through the department she organized a memorable exhibition of work by her students, teachers and other artists, held in the Woolner Hall, at the Punjab University. A catalogue was printed in which articles written by Anna Molka and details of the department appeared. Looking at it now is awe-inspiring, it reads like a 'Who's Who' of art in Pakistan. Ahmed Parvez, Ali Imam, Moyene Najmi, Naseem Hafiz Qazi, Anwar Jalal Shemza, Anwar Afzal, Hanif Ramay, Razia Feroze and Miriam Shah were among the contributing artists while Abdur Rahman Chughtai displayed his work as a gesture of support to the department. That

year, young unknown Ahmed Parvez was awarded the University Shield for Men for an extraordinary pastel piece worked on newsprint. Naseem Hafiz Qazi was awarded the University Shield for Women for a large composition in Tempera, *The Awakening*. So much talent, so much energy and optimism sourced the modest, black and white booklet, and at the helm of events, Anna Molka Ahmed, energizing all with her own indomitable spirit.

Hard as it was to leave Anna and the children, her father decided he and Addie would be more comfortable living in England. The climate of Lahore did not suit them, and as Addie had recently inherited a house from a relative in England, they had a home of their own to go to. After their departure, Anna felt very lonely, but soon picked up the threads of her life. A friend, who been a teacher at the Cathedral School before shifting to England, visited Lahore often, and arranged to stay with Anna during her visits. Anna's friends from the University often dropped in to discuss work and have tea, and life continued in to discuss work and have tea, and life continued at a busy, challenging and always interesting pace. Anna Molka was totally absorbed in her children and her work. "Even when painting, she would give us brushes and paint to paint on the back of her canvas," said Tahira. Looking back on their formative years, Anna's daughters recall the love and care with which she raised them. Zarah remembers how busy they were kept with music lessons, sitar, dance and other activities and both the girls showed musical talent. Tahira described how, in her loud, powerful voice, "She would often join in our Indian classical singing lessons. Mummy even tried to play the sitar but it required too much practice and her painting did not allow her that, so she was content that we played for her. She believed in laughter and song and she loved all kinds of music. 'If music be the food of love play on', she would quote." Then of course there was homework to be done. "Though Mummy was so busy," said Tahira, "She always seemed

to be there for us. After her work she would be with us, asking interested questions as to our activities, and of course, Sunday we spent the whole day together. If either of us needed a new dress, she would sit up all night cutting and sewing and by morning, the dress would be ready."

In 1955, the Fine Art Society was started and membership included all University and College students interested in Fine Arts. Lecturers were invited to speak on art related subjects and lively discussions followed. Years later when I talked with Anna Molka of artists she had known, she spoke very warmly of Ahmed Parvez referring to him as 'a real artist.' "He never created a false background for himself or posed as a teacher, he was a real artist." Anna Molka recommended him for a French scholarship, and both were disappointed when it was accorded to someone else with 'connections'. Parvez vowed he would never exhibit his work in France, and he never did.

Anna Molka continued to organize Annual Art Exhibitions at the Department of Fine Arts, a tradition established in 1942. Paintings by the staff and their students were displayed, and whenever possible, Anna Molka invited outside artists to participate. With each exhibition an illustrated catalogue was published. In 1953, Anna Molka initiated solo exhibitions of young artists with catalogues that carried monographs she had written. Ozzir Zubay displayed a collection of sculpture and paintings in February that year, followed by an exhibition of work by Ahmed Parvez exhibited in November.

Razzia Feroze showed sculpture and paintings in March 54, and in December, Hanif Ramay exhibited his work. Anwar Jalal Shemza exhibited sculpture and paintings in 1956, and in March 57, an exhibition of paintings by Shakir Ali was mounted. Exhibitions followed by Cassim

Mahapara, Safdar Ali and an American artist, Elizabeth Benson. With the support of A.R. Chughtai and Ustad Allah Bux, who donated gold and silver medals for the best artists in exhibition, a lot of excitement was generated by the annual art events.

The exhibitions were visited by distinguished foreign guests, Ambassadors, Representatives of UNESCO, Delegations and Foreign Universities. When Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt visited a specially arranged art exhibition at the Punjab University, Ali Imam wrote an article in which he reproached Mrs. Roosevelt for not viewing the entire show. "It's a pity that the distinguished guest was not able to see the whole exhibition as she went to attend a private party".

Around this time, Anna Molka's family had their

first pet dog, a Russian Samoyed named Fluffy who was given to Tahira on her Birthday. From then on dogs became part of the family. There had always been cats, birds and other creatures at home, but Fluffy and his descendents were special. "Every year we went to some hill station", Tahira reminisced. 'Murree was the most popular, Mummy painted and we played. We were a small family, just my elder sister, myself and our dog. He was always with us wherever we went." In the years ahead, before giving pups away, Anna Molka would interview the potential owner and inspect their house. Tahira related that once, after giving a pup to a film star, Anna heard that the pup was not being properly cared for and promptly took him back. Professor Sajjada Vandal's father fared better after Anna Molka visited the family home in Rawalpindi, on a tour of inspection.



There were only three boys...

When Anna learnt that Fine Art was to be permitted as a subject for men she was delighted, though the objections still remained and would take time to resolve. Since Intermediate classes were no longer held in the University, students were admitted to the BA and Post-Graduate Diploma classes. Those who opposed the teaching of Fine Art in the University, made their presence felt by demanding separate classes and a separate staff for men and women. Nothing daunted, Anna requisitioned two rooms of the erstwhile Music Department downstairs for the boy's class rooms. In 1956, the University Fine Arts Department opened a class for men enabling them to offer Fine Arts as an elective subject for B.A. The boys were admitted straight to the BA Class, though they had not previously studied art. Khalid Iqbal had returned from London, qualified from the Slade School of Art, and was appointed full time lecturer.

Some years later when she began to work on her memoirs after stepping down as Head of Department, Anna Molka looked back on these events and commented: "There were only three boys in the first Fine Art class, as parents felt there was no career and no future for anyone taking up art as a subject. But these three were very talented and very dedicated: they were Aslam Minhas, Sufi Waqar Ahmed and

Colin David.

In 1956, M.A. Fine Arts classes were started and the Post-Graduate Diploma was abolished. It was a source of great satisfaction to Anna Molka that at last Fine Arts had gained recognition equal with other University subjects. The first M.A. class were the pioneer teachers qualified with the Post-Graduate Diploma, most of them teaching in colleges. Those teaching locally at the University department such as Anwar Rashid and Zakia Mallik, divided their time between teaching and studying. Miss. Naseem Hafiz Qazi came from Lyallpur College, and a new diploma holder took her place. Others from outside Lahore, took leave from their posts and were temporarily replaced by other diploma holders who were to join the M.A. Class the following year. Anna remarked: "Many and intense were the growing pains! I felt like Ulysses, always striving and seeking and enjoying the buffeting of the wind and the waves."

The tradition of annual art exhibitions of paintings by staff and students continued. In 1959, the A.R. Chughtai Gold Medal was awarded to Hanif Ramay and the Ustad Allah Bux Silver Medal was conferred on Saida Karim. Other prizewinners included Cassim Mahpara, Naseem H. Qazi and Anwar Afzal. That year in

March an exhibition of pastels by a German artist, Horst Gehrt, was held and four of the artworks were procured for the Department collection. There was also an exhibition arranged by the Fine Arts Society in which nine young artists took part.

Anna Molka had prepared the art syllabi for schools, and noted that some private schools had introduced 'School Art', but they were the exception. "I have spoken to Directors and Education Secretaries, Education Ministers, Governors and Vice-Chancellors, to no avail." She wrote, " They say Pakistan is too poor to afford art materials. I replied if they started, the manufacturers would make the necessary materials as they have started making paper. Of course, before a University could start a Teacher's Training Course of Study, the Education Department would have to create posts for art teachers in the schools." Anna was most concerned that the Fine Arts M.A. syllabus of the University did not include Art Teacher's Training. In the years to come she documented her thoughts.

"Today in 1973, we regret we relinquished the diploma, rather we should have expanded the Art Teacher's course to a full diploma. Today in Pakistan there is still no institute for training art teachers nor is there a University course for B.Ed. (Art) or M.Ed. (Art). The progressive syllabi are still there for the schools, but no trained art teachers to teach the syllabi. We have organized many special short courses for drawing masters, and primary teachers taking art classes in schools. Representatives have come from schools from all over Pakistan, from as far as Rawalpindi, Karachi, and Peshawar and classes of 30, 50, even up to 90, have been taught these contemporary methods in short courses; with all apologies to Lowenfeld, Herbert Read, Gatskill, Dewey and many other pioneers of School Arts. Unfortunately, as yet, no degree

courses have been started."

Anna Molka noted with satisfaction that four of the Diploma holders who later qualified for their M.A. degrees, went on to take Art Teacher Training in England. One of the girls obtained a Ph.D. in America, and stayed on to teach in an American University. The girls who returned home with their art teacher training qualifications, continued as assistant professors or professors in the art departments of schools as no higher posts were created for them. Anna wrote a book for teaching art to children and collaborated with her foreign qualified teachers to translate it into Urdu. She also brought out a book for teachers: *A Guide to Art Teaching*. Though the book traveled across the Punjab and Sindh, still she commented: "A Guide is not the same as a training institute."

Anna Molka took a personal interest in her students and was delighted that her 'new boys' were so gifted and serious about their work. Their presence added greatly to the dynamics of the art activities in the University, and she greatly enjoyed their company. Approached by the authorities to repair damage done to the art work of the Sikh Temple and Ranjit Singh's tomb in Lahore, Anna was told that a party of Sikh pilgrims was to visit their various religious places in Lahore, and time was short. On inspection of the site, Anna Molka was shocked at the extent of the vandalism but was confident it could be rectified. She made up a work party consisting of Miss Naseem Qazi, Mr. Khalid Iqbal, and students Aslam Minhas, Colin David and Sufi Waqar and gave an account of the experience.

REPAIRING THE SIKH TEMPLE AND RANJIT SINGH'S TOMB.

"We combined our talents to save the situation. Luckily the summer holidays were starting and we were collected early from our homes every

day, and deposited back at the end of the day when the light faded. There were no lights or fans but we kept going in June with cold drinks, food and ice-cream. The men stood on the higher scaffolding to reach the highest row of figures, and we ladies stood on lower tables. The first problem was to fill the broken holes in the brick work. I mixed brick-dust with gum Arabic as a sort of paste and then put in fine pieces of brick. We first damped the old broken holes and chip-scraped the edges so that the new paste would adhere to the old. Meanwhile we went to the Lahore Museum and searched libraries for copies of the Sikh miniature works. In a private collection I was lucky to find miniatures showing Guru Nanak in exactly the same pose as we needed to renovate the image in the temple.

By the time we had collected our references the surface of our repairs was dry and we polished it and smoothed it. We used Polymaic Colours, that had just come into the local art shops and we each chose the Guru we wished to work upon and got busy. We sang, and joked as we worked and were all young enough to enjoy the difficulties and the challenge. When that work was completed we transferred to the Tomb of Ranjit Singh. Here we had more space and were able to move around. The pictures were large and had been scratched but not dug out so the work was simpler."

"I was working quietly when one of the guards came and spoke to me in a low, confidential voice. He asked me to please supervise what one of my students was doing as he thought he was making some mistake. He pointed out Minhas, and I strolled over to see what he was doing. All the figures to be worked on were voluptuous with long hair and large, liquid eyes and pinkish skin tones. One could hardly tell which were the men and which the women, and there was Minhas, calmly painting a moustache and a beard on a woman, and enhancing the

voluptuous form of a male figure. I called the others over to see and we rolled up with laughter, actually rolling on the ground. When we sobered down we had to go round and carefully check everything we had repaired. At last the work was over and we were given relieved thanks and given a fee of two thousand rupees. It wasn't much, but we had been fed and ice-creamed and given our materials, so we cheerfully divided the cash between us."

REPAIRS FOR THE QUEEN'S VISIT.

"While the three boys were still students another job came up for us to do. This was at the visit of Prince Philip and the Queen to Lahore. Many places were being decorated and I was asked to prepare some huge paintings. One at the Race-course, and one at the High Court on the Mall. For the High Court I suggested an ancient Egyptian style painting, and for the race-course a Mughal style composition that from a distance would appear to be a miniature painting. We had to work at night on the paintings in the huge front hall of the university, for the surfaces were the largest size hardboard we could procure, about eight by fourteen feet. We drew them in with charcoal then proceeded to fill them in with poster colours. We worked all night and chaprasis had to go to our homes to bring food for us in Tiffin carriers. Tea was made all the time and the Registrar popped in from time to time, and even the then Commissioner of Lahore visited us. To keep us from feeling sleepy, we used to sing and talk and laugh hilariously as we worked, and the chaprasis used to take turns to be our watch dogs, and inform us if inspection teams were coming. Once returning after taking a break in my office, I found all the artists asleep and our technician Yaqub, with Abdul Haq our studio attendant, filling in the colours on the drawings. We all had a good laugh and thought it was a good idea that Yaqub and Abdul Haq hurried things up by filling in colour. Once, I remember, I turned round to look at the huge miniature of

the Moghul Garden, and found Minhas and Miss Qazi painting roses as big as cabbages.”

With Naseem Hafiz Qazi, Khalid Iqbal and Colin David, Anna Molka held evening art classes at the Arts Council. Anna noted “we all cooperated in the teaching, and at last our department was relieved from casual students”. On Sunday mornings Anna Molka held classes for children. “I started a children’s art class at the Arts Council so that I was able to demonstrate the contemporary methods of conducting classes teaching children art, to the local and visiting school teachers. We held Child Art Exhibitions, the work was so creative, rich in colour and very different to the work produced in the classes of the drawings masters who still persisted. Colin David obtained his MFA, Fine Arts in 1960, and stayed on to teach at the University. In 61, he went on scholarship to the Slade School of Art, London, and a lively correspondence ensued between him and Anna Molka.

Anna Molka witnessed the expansion of art education and commented: “The B.A. classes

were now given to the colleges, and Lahore College for Women had so many art students that they have a staff of six lecturers. The Government College for Men also started Art classes when Mr. Aslam Minhas qualified with his M.A.” But the expansion was not without its complications. “I had to stop the extra activities and concentrate on the new Honours School that the University was introducing for all subjects. The students who wished to stay on at their colleges and continue the subject of Fine Art as an elective subject came to the University after their B.A. for their M.A. Fine Arts Composite studies. Others came to the Honours directly after their Intermediate with Fine Arts, and studied for four years a full-time course at the University”. Anna Molka had always included Miniature Painting in the syllabus in the hope that one day, instead of copying museum pieces, a student might adopt the technique as his or her own mode of expression and take it further in an individual and creative way. She noted that, “Although all the students made their own compositions and dressed their figures in contemporary costumes, no-one did more than the stipulated course.”



SYLLABUS FOR M.A. FINE ARTS

Paper I: **History of European Art.**

Introduction.

The Meaning of Beauty.

Vision and Design.

Form and Function.

Part (a) — Italian Art from the middle of the 13th Century to the 17th Century.

(i) The rise and decline of the Siennese School.

(ii) Giotto.

(iii) The Florentine School and its masters.

(iv) The Venetian School. Its origin and masters.

Part (b) History of the various schools of painting from the 15th Century to the 18th Century.

(i) Flemish School.

(ii) Dutch School.

(iii) French School.

(iv) Spanish School.

(v) German School.

(vi) English School.

Part (c) Modern Art.

The French School till the middle of 19th Century.

Manet.

The Impressionists.

Cezanne.

The Post-Impressionists.

Cubism.

Fauvism.

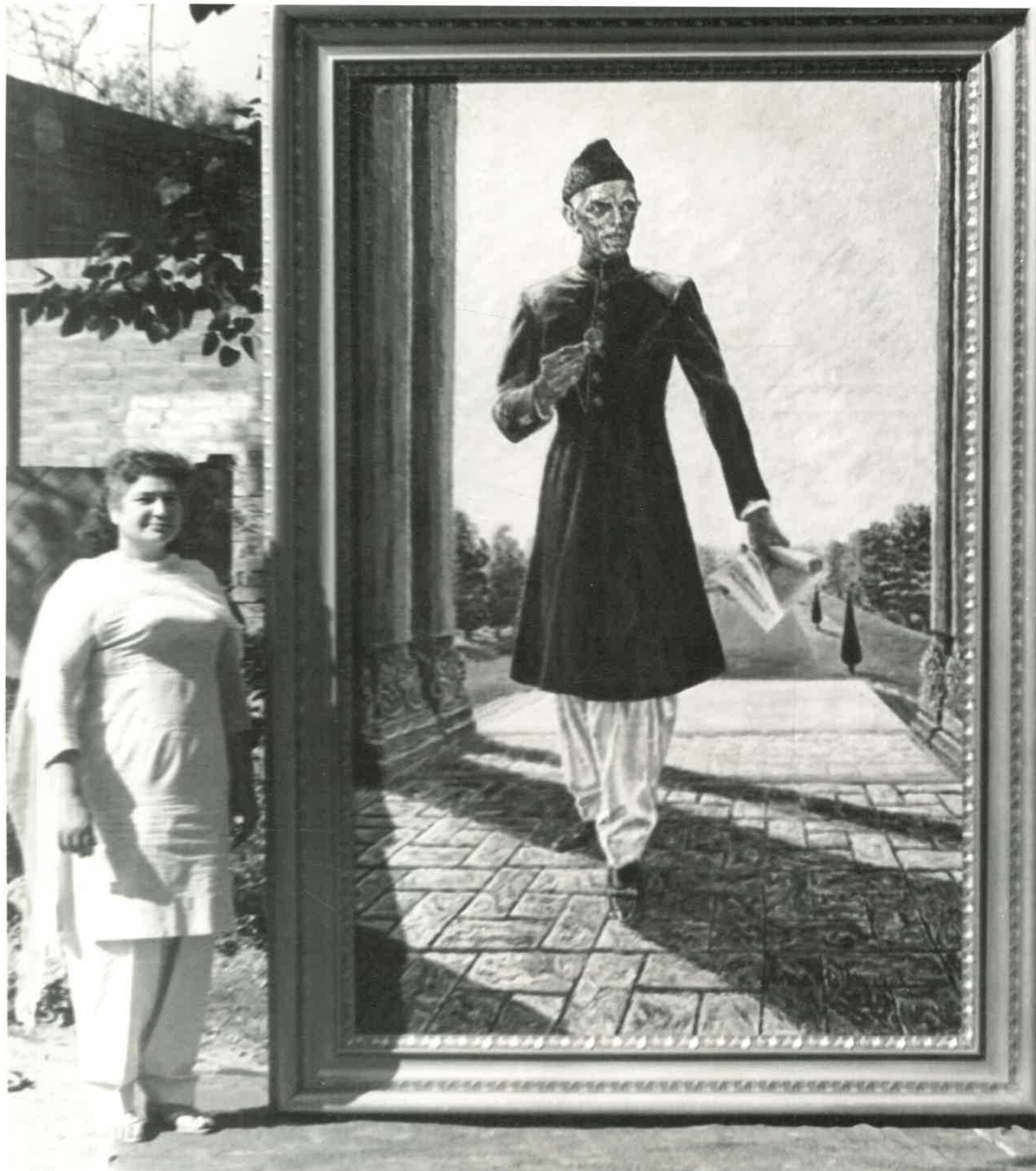
Expressionism.

Surrealism.

Abstract Art.

OUTLINE OF TESTS FOR M.A. FINE ARTS EXAMINATION

				Marks	Marks
Paper I:	History of European Art.	(3 hours)	..		150
	(a) Renaissance in Italy.		..	50	
	(b) Various Schools of Painting.			50	
	(c) Modern Art – 19 th Century to contemporary times.			50	
Part II:	Technical Methods.	(3 hours)	..	..	100
Part III:					
Option	(i) Muslim and Indo-Pakistan Art.	..	..		200
	(a) Muslim Painting and Calligraphy.	(3 hours)	..	100	
	(b) Indo-Pakistan Art.	(3 hours)	..	100	
	OR				
Option	(ii) – Muslim Architecture. ..	..	..	..	200
	(a) Muslim Architecture outside the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent)	(3 hours)	..	100	
	(b) Muslim Architecture in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent.	(3 hours)	..	100	
Option	(iii) Hindu Architecture & Sculpture	..			200
	(a) Buddhist Architecture & Sculpture.	(3 hours)	..	100	
	(b) Hindu Architecture & Sculpture.	(3 hours)	..	100	
Paper	IV: Practical.	..	..	..	200
	3 months towards the end of the final year.	..			
	Easel painting on an approved subject carried out under proper supervision in the University Department of Fine Arts or any other institution recognized for the purpose.				
Paper	V: Exhibition of Paintings.	..	..	..	350
	This will be accompanied by the report of the Head of the Department that this is candidate's own work executed during the two years preceding the examination.				
	Vth year Mural or Easel Painting 3' x 6'.		..	50	
	Portrait Life-size.	..	..	50	
	Painting.	..	..	75	
	Drawing.	..	..	75	
	Sculpture and other Technical methods.	..	..	50	
	Note Books and Sketch Books.	..	..	50	



Anna Molka Ahmed with portrait of Quaid-e-Azam. (New Campus Auditorium Punjab University).

The turbulent sixties

For Anna and the Fine Arts Department of the Punjab University, the sixties began on a cheerily optimistic note. The men's section of the department continued to flourish. Anna Molka's dedication and discipline ensured good results and she was instrumental in several promising graduates receiving foreign scholarships to continue their studies abroad. In 1962 Colin David returned from the Slade School of Art in London to teach in the Department. Later, in 1963, there was even greater cause for celebration when Anna Molka was awarded the Tamgh-e-Imtiaz by President Ayub Khan.

Colin David remained in Anna's good books until he and Zarah fell in love. At that stage it appears that Anna Molka's bias against marriage for her women students applied equally to Zarah, as she was a very promising student and her mother entertained high hopes for her. It was her wish that Zarah should go abroad for higher studies and then make a career for herself. Friends and well wishers advised Anna Molka to give her blessings to the match, telling her that otherwise Zarah would refuse to study. Reluctantly she gave in but with stringent conditions, one of them being that the young couple could meet only once a month. Zarah and Colin were officially engaged for one year, and Zarah went on to stand first in MFA exam, but Anna Molka's attitude did not soften.

In 1964, Colin was forced to leave the department and joined the National College of Arts, then flourishing under the principalship of Shakir Ali. Zarah celebrated her 21st birthday and moved into a Hostel, and the two of them

quietly married. Khalid Iqbal also left the Punjab University and joined NCA, and Miss. Qazi left the department and joined the Lahore College. Anna Molka was devastated at losing her close friends and valued faculty members as well as her daughter, and for years wept when she heard Zarah's name. Zubeida Javed vividly recalled the drama of it all and pointed out the wider ramifications. Anna Molka lost three of her finest teachers and their replacements by no means filled their shoes. Very few were in sympathy with the rigid attitude Anna Molka had taken, and when she complained to Ahmed Parvez that Colin had married her daughter against her wishes, he answered tartly, "And I'm going to marry the other one." The entire affair caused a deep rift between NCA and the Punjab University Fine Arts Department which is only now healing, thanks to the enlightened viewpoints of today's artists.

Then came the dramatic events of September 1965, when Indian forces attempted to cross the border and wrest control of Lahore. Anna Molka was deeply affected by the violence that ensued. She followed the news closely and expressed her pride at the heroic bravery of Pakistan's defending forces. Her daughter Tahira relates how Anna Molka and some of her selected students were given a top-secret assignment and locked themselves away for several days to work as directed. Apparently at that time the army possessed few tanks, and to hoodwink the enemy a 'trompe l'oeil' company of tanks was created. Images of actual tanks were projected on to huge surfaces and painted. The realistic reproductions were then transferred onto the

sides of other vehicles. From a distance, even seen through binoculars, the tanks were utterly convincing. It was planned that two genuine tanks would move about amongst the dummies keeping up a rapid fire action. Anna Molka and her team never breathed a word about their mission but they were proud to have played an important role in serving their country in its hour of need.

After the ceasefire, Anna Molka was one of a group of artists who visited the badly damaged and traumatized villages along the borders. The sad desolation of destroyed dwellings, burnt trees and scorched earth symbolized to her the epitome of human suffering: "How long will violence and blood-thirsty viciousness rule this world, and how long must the innocent continue to suffer?". Anna took out her sketch book and as she worked it appeared to her that the surroundings came alive.

"Although I used only pen and ink for record, as I sketched I saw flames and smoke, the whole scene red and orange, black and grey. Instead of the silence of death I heard the screaming agony of the dying, the wounded and the terrified. I saw unarmed civilians fleeing, Mothers holding their babies, children clutching their mothers. I stood there and heard and saw so intensely that I had to cover my ears and eyes and leave the burnt up residue of a landscape...I could not bear it". A year was to pass before Anna Molka could bring herself to translate her anguish to canvas. "I painted in sorrow", she said sadly.

Expressing her tumultuous emotions, Anna Molka worked on a series of paintings that addressed the brutality of violent actions, and the heroism of individuals. It was at an exhibition of her war-inspired paintings displayed at the PACC in Karachi that I met Anna Molka for the first time. When I entered, I found Anna Molka

sitting alone in the gallery and we started to talk. She told me of the experience that gave rise to the work, and of her immense admiration for the courage shown against great odds. In several paintings she had depicted the gallantry of the defenders as well as the chaos of war. One painting, an allegory depicting a farmer with bare torso defending his land, had been placed behind a curtain, and Anna and I found common cause for amusement at the thought of viewers sensibilities threatened by such a subject. It was that instant rapport that marked the beginning of our friendship, and from then on I was an ardent admirer of this outspoken woman who had contributed so much to the country in the field of art education. Whenever I was in Lahore I called upon her and enjoyed hearing her reminiscences of art and artists. She spoke often of the bravery of others, but in my eyes Anna Molka remains one of the most gallant women I have ever known.

In Lahore I met up with Zubeida Javed and Rahat Naveed Masood, Anna Molka Ahmed was the topic of conversation. Both these well known artists had been students of Anna Molka at different times. Zubeida had graduated from the Punjab University in the Sixties and then, at Anna Molka's insistence, become a member of the faculty. For Rahat it was a short experience of the final six months prior to Anna's retirement. As we pooled recollections and reminiscences, the distinct impression emerged of a versatile personality, a strict disciplinarian with the proverbial heart of gold, but no patience with time wasters. Tireless in her efforts to propagate art, she was an ardent advocate of a woman's right to utilize her talents long before the concept of feminism became fashionable. Under her control, the Fine Arts department of the university was a lively, happening place with never a dull moment. Inspired by her, students studied seriously and, every year, an exhibition of the work produced in the Department was

displayed.

Rahat described the Woolner Hall, where the exhibitions were held, as it used to be before it became a regular venue for University exams. "Mrs. Ahmed was a very strong administrator, and the department is still moving on the momentum. I was a student of hers for only about six months but I remember clearly how objects were all kept in their proper places. Easels were stacked, mattresses were rolled away and her system carried on for some years. To run an institution one needs to be a very good administrator as well as a good teacher and she was also, a good artist".

Anna Molka had a deep emotional attachment to the Department she had worked so hard to establish. She could account for each and every item it contained and insisted on its proper maintenance, the regular painting of walls, doors and windows. She saw to it that there was a permanent display of watercolours painted by the staff and students in the halls and corridors. Foreign visitors would often visit the Department and buy paintings and the young artists enjoyed the extra pocket money. There were times when Anna flew into a rage, shouting and red with fury, reducing even the men to tears, but she cared tremendously for the people around her and their interests. Many times she took on the Governing Board on their behalf, often courting unpopularity in the process.

When Zubeida Javed graduated, Anna Molka insisted that she should join the faculty. "She filled in my application herself and took me to the Vice Chancellor and other senior people for my interview. She told them, 'this is Zubeida, you may ask her what you like but I'm taking her.' Then the Board muttered 'what's the use of us coming here when she won't allow us to take the interview...' but Mrs. Ahmed had her way."

In spite of the full schedule, which left no time for exhibitions, Anna worked continuously. There was a verandah outside the office where she would work on sculpture, and in her office she would stand before an easel and paint. Zubeida Javed recalled that when she passed Anna Molka's office and if she happened to be in a good mood, Anna would call out, "Come on in Zubeida, and let's have samosas and tea." Zubeida recalled the excitement of the annual art exhibitions at the University: "Mrs. Ahmed never lost her enthusiasm for the annual exhibitions. She would ask us all to make three new paintings for display. No old work was considered and that was a very good incentive for us. We all produced new paintings for her approval and the friendly competition made it more interesting."

For her students, watching Anna Molka at work was an inspiring experience. She worked with a collection of palette knives and her hands, and would squeeze paint straight from the tube and mix it on the canvas. Anna Molka never used the colour green but would create her own shades mixing yellow and blue. She described her work painted outdoors as "Expressionist." She loved the sun and took her students to paint 'on-spot', teaching them to observe nature and their surroundings with an informed perception. Piling into the school bus, off they would go to a village on the Multan Road or to emperor Jehangir's tomb, occasionally to the walled city or the canal road, in those days a very quiet spot.

Without exception all her students enjoyed Anna Molka's lectures on art subjects enormously. These talks were given in her office and it would be jam-packed, with an absorbed audience and there was always a pin-drop silence. Anna Molka once related how on one occasion an electrician was working in the next room and tapping on the wall. She shouted out to him to be silent, but the tapping continued so she stalked off and

shouted at him as he worked perched on a ladder. According to her account, he was so scared that he jumped from the top of the ladder to the stairs and was never seen again.

Anna Molka's efforts in the field of art education came to fruition in her lifetime. Largely due to her efforts, she witnessed Fine Art taught in colleges in every region of the country, many of the departments established by her own students. A. R. Nagori, one of the most talented of Anna Molka's students, seriously contemplated taking another job because of family considerations. On hearing this, Mrs. Ahmed hurled a heavy glass ashtray in his general direction. Luckily it missed and to her great satisfaction, he fulfilled her hopes for him in 1970, when he established

a Fine Arts Department in Sindh University.

Anna Molka began to make more time for her art. Putting aside the cares of the preceding few years, she started painting outdoors again, inspired by the sight of sun-drenched landscapes. She loved gardening and planted hedges and plants and as long as she was well enough, spent every week-end trimming them. She compared the gloomy streets of London, "rows upon rows of grey houses with gray clouds and rain," with the sun-drenched views around her. Seated in her garden, she blissfully painted her house and its surrounds, trees dappled with sunlight, grassy patches and bright flowers. At these times she knew she could never again live in England; her life was her work and home was in Lahore.



A period of transition

Like many of the country's artists, Anna Molka was deeply upset by the war that resulted in the secession of East Pakistan in 1971 and the consequent migration of several distinguished artists to the newly created state of Bangladesh. Her patriotism aroused, Anna Molka once again commemorated the devastation of war through her art and was kept busy working on commissions for the army. She produced life-size portraits of Pakistan's military heroes for the War Museum and Army Headquarters as well as documenting dramatic war incidents on canvas.

A change in regime in Islamabad in December 1971 brought about traumatic incidents in Anna Molka's life as well. Entering her office one morning in 1972, she, along with seventeen other heads of university departments, was presented a cyclostyled circular announcing that the new government had instituted a scheme of rotating the Chair. In future, they were informed, the position of Head of Department would be rotated between three senior staff



Anna Molka Ahmed.

members, who would take charge for a period of two years. One can only imagine her feelings. In one fell swoop, the reins of the Department she had built up from the grass roots with such commitment, to which she had dedicated her life to for over three decades, and for which she had sacrificed so much had been snatched from her hands. Anna Molka, all future plans and hopes brought to an abrupt standstill, handed charge to associate professor Mrs. Anwar Afzal who became the Head of Department, to be followed in 1975 by Dr. Khalid Mahmud.

"Our departments were snatched away and two years rotation system was brought in. Whether a person is a professor, associate professor or a lecturer, he or she was to take over a department without previous administrative experience or even enough teaching years, whether suited or willing. It was a good way for the new political power to become popular with the younger generation, but the effect on the university teaching and learning was terrible," noted Anna Molka with intense regret.

She went on to describe the result of these changes from the point of view of professor of Fine Art and not Head of the Department: "Many belonging to the powerful political party were made university lecturers, then came a declaration that all temporary employees were to be made permanent. Since they constituted a majority on the Academic Staff Association, the hard-won system changed. No action was taken against lecturers who did not attend their classes, discipline lapsed, University autonomy was finished and the Chairmen were powerless to administrate. The students found their staff did not care for them and so they did not care for their staff."

Anna passed through a painful emotional crisis at this time, while trying to adjust to the changing circumstances by altering her lifestyle. She determined to give more time to the enjoyment of painting and lecturing, as well as working on her memoirs. The outstanding success of some of her former students was a source of great solace and she wrote with pride: "Zulqarnain Hyder is presently on scholarship in France. He joined the department of Fine Art to teach painting and is now Assistant Professor. Ghulam Rasul went on scholarship to USA, came back to the Department and left to become Visual Arts Director of the Pakistan National Council of the Arts. Sohail Wali studied Graphics in England, and is now teaching Graphic Design. Khalid Mahmud after B.A. with Fine Arts and LLB, obtained his M.A. Fine Arts and then a scholarship to Hawaii to study the History of Asian Art. He is now Associate Professor of the Department and teaches History of Art. Another young lecturer, Shahnawaz Zaidi, obtained his MFA Graphic Design in the first batch of the professional degree and is teaching Graphic Design. Mr. Khalid Anis, one of the Honours students, is lecturing on History of Art at the National College, and Mr. A.R. Nagori started the Fine Art Department of the Sindh University.

So it is the men have pulled their weight teaching, although they are still out-numbered by the women." Anna went on to mention Lala Rukh who had been an excellent student and then won a scholarship to study the History of Art in London.

If a roll call were to be taken of Anna Molka Ahmed's former students, one would find many who have distinguished themselves in their field. Invariably they speak of their student days and the stories relating to Anna Molka are legion. They speak with awe of times when she fearlessly fought for them during Board meetings, of her taking them on adventure-packed trips. One even recalls being rescued from a police station after being picked up during a political demonstration. She admonished, encouraged, and cajoled; sometimes she reduced them to tears and at others they remember her shaking with laughter. With utter dedication she equipped them to face life. Among the many generations of those she taught, Anna Molka is revered as an icon. As she once remarked to me, "If Chughtai is the Father of Art in Pakistan, I am the Mother." Certainly she regarded three decades of students as her children.

Anna Molka observed with dismay the deteriorating atmosphere, lack of discipline and declining interest in the Department. Lecturers did not attend classes, nor bother to inform the Head of Department of their absence. Students wandered restlessly about the campus without guidance, skipped classes to go shopping or wasted their time on other diversions. Further shocks were in store. Anna noted, "After three years of quietly teaching and observing the situation, we were given a government handout that in future all University Faculty would retire at the age of fifty-eight on par with Government servants, instead of the previous sixty years. Instead of being able to gradually adjust to the idea of retirement and take some earned leave,

we arrived at the office for work and were told to retire one day before our birthdays.” For Anna Molka, this development came as a bitter blow to the heart. All the years of work, struggle and sacrifice disregarded. Still vigorous and full of enthusiasm, after thirty-five years of dedication and commitment, she was to be ‘put out to grass’ like a discarded race-horse. Perhaps it was this that inspired the painting she titled: *Living Rubbish*, which depicts a discarded heap of aged and unwanted human beings.

During the vacation period, Anna Molka wandered through the deserted Department, sadly contemplating the history of each treasured object. There was the desk of polished teak made in Amritsar by Sheikh’s drawing master. “I have sat at this table for so many years, through the partition of India, through the wars in ‘65, and in ‘71. Within a few days I must say goodbye to this faithful friend. The Vice-Chancellor is dead, I will be gone and the desk still retains its original polish.” That desk remains in place, presently used by Shahnawaz Zaidi. There were two objects Anna Molka had retained on her table during all these years. One, a clock that Anna Molka bought for two rupees was passed on to Mrs. Anwar Afzal, and according to Shahnawaz Zaidi, is on his table today. The other was a bright yellow, round, flower vase that sat on her desk and welcomed her cheerfully each day. Ceremoniously, Anna Molka shattered the vase into many pieces, gathered the broken remnants in a silk scarf and had them buried under a tree. “My heart was in pieces with my vase under the ground...”

At the age of 58, in 1975 Anna Molka was officially retired, but there was considerable opposition to the order by staff and students, and she was recalled for a further two years then retired again in 1977 at the age of 60. Granted a further extension, Anna Molka remained as lecturer until 1979 when she was made Professor Emeritus by the Punjab University. Anna Molka was the first woman Professor of Art in Pakistan, and the only one to have been honoured as Professor Emeritus, a distinction that entailed a modest honorarium and a permanent studio of her own in the University.

It was a cause for celebration among her students, former and present, when in 1979, Anna Molka was awarded the Presidents Pride of Performance. In those days the honour carried no monetary award, but Anna Molka traveled jubilantly to Islamabad to receive it. She was enormously elated until she returned home to find her infant grandson Owais, seriously ill in hospital. Tahira recalls her mother’s mood of jubilation evaporated as she sat anxiously at the baby’s side. During these very difficult years, Anna’s main source of happiness had been the arrival of her grandchildren. When Zehertara, affectionately known by the pet name of Zerry, was born Anna Molka rejoiced in the fact that she had grandparents, aunts and uncles living close by. However it was Owais, who was her favourite and constant companion, always ready to chat and play board games with her. In 1992, Anna expressed her deep love for the children in a published book of poems.

The closing years

During her years of retirement, Anna Molka produced a sizeable body of paintings, most of them on a large scale. On retirement she declared that she would write her memoirs, and paint a series of three large canvases, 'Hell', 'Heaven', and 'Qiyamat – the Day of Resurrection'. After that she said she would relax. True enough Anna wrote a detailed description of her life and friends up to 1951, and painted the series of three, large scale spiritually inspired works haunting her imagination, but relaxation eluded her.

In 1982; Anna Molka was conferred the Quaid-i-Azam Award by the Pakistan National Council of the Arts. In 1983, in recognition of her extraordinary contribution in the field of art, she was awarded a gold medal by the Pakistan Federation of Business and Professional Women. In 1984, a retrospective exhibition of her work was arranged at the Lahore Museum, the artist's first solo exhibition in Lahore. It came a decade-and-a-half after the war inspired series exhibited in Karachi in 1969. It is recorded that over 70 oil paintings, 40 pastel works and sculpture were displayed, a truly representative selection of the work produced by the artist over a period of 40 years.

A catalogue written by Miriam Shah Habib was published to commemorate the occasion. The author who had been a student of Anna Molka's and a member of the celebrated 'Lahore Artist's Group', wrote of some of the distinguished artists who attended the Punjab University Fine Arts Department during Anna Molka's tenure. They

included Ijazul Hassan, Shaukat Mahmud, and Shaukat Rizvi. "Among women one could mention Anwar Afzal, Zakia Mallik, Abbassi Abidi, Jamila Zaidi, Zubeida Javed, Razia Feroze, Nighat Idrees, Naseem Qazi, Tansy Masher, and Jalees Nagi. "

There were some epic works displayed at the hugely attended event including, 'The Flood,' that portrayed masses of people desperately trying to escape the encroaching waters; 'The Mujahid,' and one of the artist's favourite subjects, The Punjabi Farmer. The painting titled, '10th of Muharrum, had taken three years to complete. According to Tahira, for three successive years Anna Molka had taken a position where she had a good vantage point of the annual procession, and from where she sketched and took photographs. The intricately detailed painting, is filled with the colour and frenzied emotion of the occasion overlooked by the old city buildings of Lahore.

A deeply moving painting showing the trans-borders migration 1947, was a commissioned piece painted on canvas and measuring 4'x6'. Central to the painting were the figures of an old couple leaning over the body of a young man. 'Refugees 1947', was Anna Molka's 'Pieta'.

Tahira Ayaz described as 'massive' the life-size, 5'x8' portraits of the Quaid-i-Azam and Allama Iqbal that Anna Molka painted, asking only the price of the materials used, now hanging in the University auditorium. Reproduced on an even larger scale, they can be seen at the new Punjab



Anna Molka in the 1980s.

University campus at Allama Iqbal town.

A painting titled: 'News' showed a tranquil village scene with two turbaned ancients listening to a wireless in a sun-drenched setting while smoking their hookahs. This painting is now in the collection of Dr. Hamid Quraishi, in the States. Among the other paintings shown in exhibition was 'The Kaaba'. According to Tahira this was Anna Molka's favourite painting, now part of the Lahore Museum collection. Included in the body

of sculpture exhibited were studies of poet Sufi Tabassam, Khalid Iqbal, and her great friend and mentor, Mian Afzal Husain. Anna's sculpture was strong and commanding; while working in the third dimension as in her paintings, she used an 'impasto' style, incorporating thick pieces of clay. In her critique of Anna Molka's exhibition, Miriam Habib wrote, "A group of clay busts cast in plaster present another gallery of intellectuals and literati known in Lahore circles."

Anna Molka loved to express her feelings on large canvases. She used a variety of palette knives and sometimes her hands, and she painted her experience of life. "I am an artist", she said, "who painted everything that happened to me. I painted the Lahore railway station on our return from Murree, the terrible piles of bodies covered by white sheets". Describing her art, Anna Molka said she drew, composed and painted at the same time. "I use a lot of paint, no oil or turpentine, I paint straight from the tube on a white ground." Anna Molka always used the best paints available,



Anna Molka painting Jurge's portrait.

Artist's Quality paints, because the commonly used Student's Quality would fade in three decades she insisted. Indeed, looking at her work today it is as fresh and vibrant as though it were painted yesterday.

Tahira, who made her career in teaching, described her mother's working day. On the way to her work, Tahira would drop Anna Molka at her Punjab University studio at 9:00 a.m., where she would begin to work immediately. On the way home at the end of her day, Tahira would retrieve her mother and together they would return home. In 1985, Anna completed the series of three paintings she had long had in mind. The first was 'Hell', consisting of three panels worked in oils. It is a painting full of swirling movement, countless anonymous scarlet figures moving about among the flames. This painting she exhibited at the Goethe Institut, Lahore. The second in the series, now part of a collection in the USA, was titled 'Heaven'. Finally the artist completed the 'Day of Resurrection', so intense

so detailed that one must stand at various distances from the painting to study the details properly. After completing these monumental pieces, work that belongs in a National Museum of Art, Anna Molka began a delightful series of paintings on Lawrence Gardens. These are beautiful, sun-drenched images, vibrant with life and colour and exuding optimism.

In 1986, Anna Molka painted two magnificent views of the Lahore Secretariat and its surroundings. One is now hanging in the Secretariat and the other is with Tahira.

Anna had a series of three wooden platforms, each one placed on the other, that she would stand on to paint, and her family lived in fear of her falling. Tahira pleaded with her mother to work on a smaller scale but Anna Molka had too much to express to be restricted to a standard-size canvas. 'The Dance of Death', painted in oils on six joined canvases measuring 8'x4', appears as a macabre warning to mankind. It



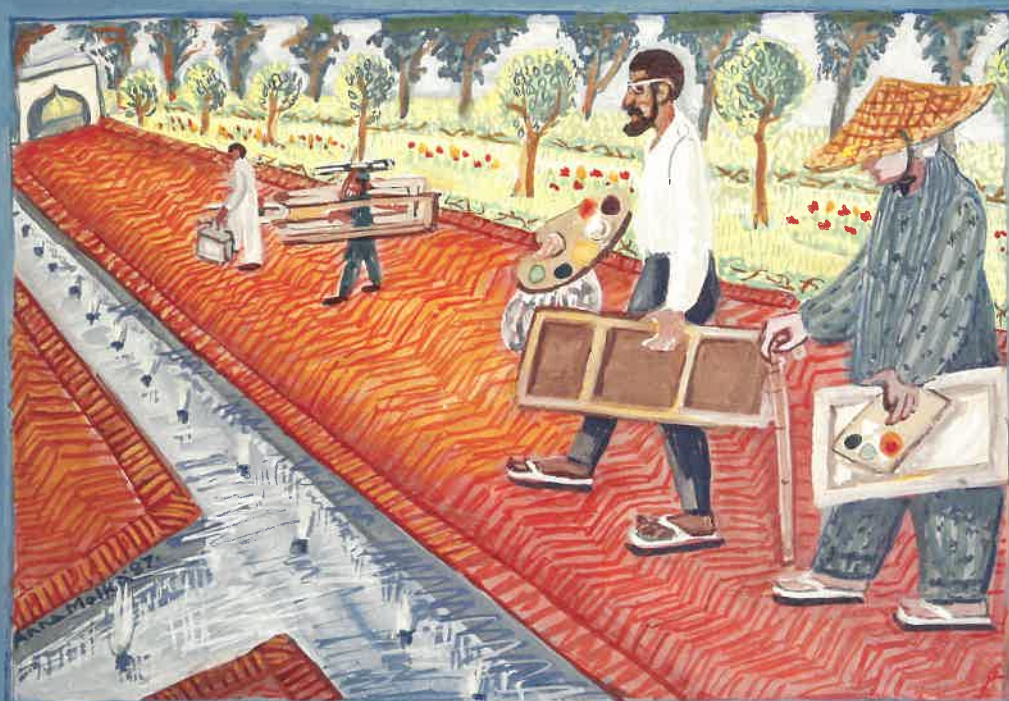
Anna Molka in her studio with Jurge.

represents history's tyrants treading on a ground carpeted by skeletons while the figure of Death laughs and dances for joy. This narrative work ends with the symbolic mushroom clouds heralding the destruction of mankind by mankind. Seeing the work today, the incredible surface texture is awesome. Suffering from a number of ailments, Anna Molka felt rejuvenated while working; she called it 'therapy' and when in action at her easel forgot all her pains and problems.

Anna Molka still retained her love of outdoors, and was regularly accompanied by Ghulam Mustafa, now Executive Director, Punjab Arts Council, on painting expeditions. The senior painter delighted in rural villages and their inhabitants, and aspired to capture scenes from their daily life. To her, their existence appeared idyllic. Ghulam Mustafa related how on the last occasion, Anna Molka and he were quietly at

their easels close to a group of mud-baked dwellings when a group of mounted dacoits galloped up to them. They were fierce-looking, armed men with family connections to the village, and both the artists were filled with trepidation, but the dacoits spoke to them very courteously, asking them if they required anything. After Mustafa's assurance that all was well, they rode away and Anna and Mustafa hastily began to pack away their materials in their hurry to move out of the locality. Suddenly Anna Molka collapsed. It was the onset of her first stroke and Mustafa recalls getting her into the car with difficulty and rushing back to Lahore.

That event in 1986 was Anna Molka's last painting expedition away from home. From then on she painted in the garden or in her studio. Tahira was extremely worried about her mother's passion for working on a large scale. She recalled the first mural Anna Molka painted when she





Anna Molka with Jurge and Fluffy.

was a child of about five years old. Commissioned by Crescent Paints, it seemed to her enormous. "It was painted with brushes and there was a lot of blue and I believe it is still with them today". After suffering a stroke, Anna Molka was strongly urged by the doctor to stop painting on such an epic scale. Tahira put her foot down insisting her mother ease up, and Anna agreed to compromise.

Using the medium of gouache on wasli she began a series of paintings she referred to as her 'miniatures', and in many of them she re-created her early years as a young wife. In memory she returned to a period of youthful love and exuberance, the sun shining, bathing her activities with optimism. Visiting Anna Molka at this time, one was aware of the intense emotion incorporated in the artwork. Particularly moving was an image of young Anna Molka learning to cook, crouched over a wood and charcoal fire. Foreign visitors to Lahore, from Japan, America, Germany and

other countries, often found their way to Anna Molka's house and a number of Anna's 'miniatures' ended up in homes abroad. Now just a few remain in Tahira's possession. Found among Anna Molka's papers was a letter dated May 16th, 1989, from 'Jurge and Wolfgang', for whom Anna had painted a portrait.: "We love to remember the glorious hours spent in your studio and your home. Greetings to the children, your daughter and Fluffy, hope he is well. We look forward to having the portrait in our house."

In spite of her promises to Tahira, Anna Molka continued to work ten hours a day, sitting at a wooden table and using a magnifying glass. But that was the essence of the artist in Anna Molka. One never saw a painting executed without passion, and viewed in present times, those feelings still reverberate from her work. The intensity of Anna Molka's working habits played havoc with her health; there were serious setbacks



Anna Molka in 1979.

and a fall downstairs resulting in a broken hip.

While recovering in hospital Anna Molka was interviewed on film by a former student of the Fine Arts Department of the Punjab University, Zarar Babary, a young friend of Anna Molka's and a great admirer of her work. Speaking to him from her hospital bed Anna Molka was as forceful as ever. Glancing around her spotless room she wondered aloud how she was to pay the hospital bill. She spoke of the lack of appreciation shown to artists in Pakistan and offered as example the experiences of Sadequain, Shakir Ali and Ahmed Pervaz, all of whom, she insisted: "Died of broken hearts." When Zarar countered by detailing the awards conferred on her, Anna Molka threw up her arms with a violent gesture: "Take

them...take them," she said, "What I need is somewhere to hang my work." Later Zarar visited the house on Queen's Road and documented the lack of space, paintings stacked in corners, one upon another.

A bout of food poisoning had serious consequences and led to Anna Molka being unconscious for two weeks. It was over a year before she recovered from its effects. Eventually acute attacks of vertigo prevented her from painting but fortunately, she found a new form of expression. She began to write poems that were as emotion-filled and colourful as her painting. It began with Tahira, who was working on a poem for a school song. She asked her mother to help her find a rhyming word and Anna



Photograph of Anna, 1990.

explained the way to do this by working through the alphabet. While engaged in this exercise Anna Molka became interested, and that night, Tahira recalls, she wrote three poems. Anna Molka poured out her feeling in words describing the pain of her mother's loss, the sadness of her broken dreams, her lost love and loneliness. Anna Molka was back in form and in 1992, she published a book of verse containing fifty-two poems.

Anna Molka was always lively company with strong opinions, even when ill, and she continued to enjoy meeting friends. Once she began to talk to me about the local film industry and what nonsense was produced. "Local films have nothing to do with life in Pakistan," she told me. "Where would you find someone you know posturing before a tree, all those songs and dances, it's a just a formula to make money. Artists try to express real life or their thoughts, but the moneyed classes don't want to hang 'Qiyamat' on their walls, they prefer a nice tree in blossom". Pointing out a tree in the garden

her expression softened as she said, "I paint this tree every year. Some artists paint only landscape, but when figures enter the scene, the figure relates to the landscape and the narration changes." When she was well enough, artists, her past students and friends would visit every day. "It was like a party", said her daughter, "But gradually all the old friends died or became ill themselves."

Tahira recalls that gradually, as she became weaker, Anna Molka's fighting spirit also cooled. "Her aurora dimmed. 'I want to rest now, I'm tired... I am useless' she would say." But the end when it came, was unexpected. Anna Molka was a bit off colour but nothing appeared unusual. Mrs. Abbasi Abidi paid her a visit and while she was there, Anna Molka asked for a drink of orange juice. On drinking it she was immediately taken ill and asked Mrs. Abidi to leave saying she wasn't feeling well. Two days later, in the early hours of the morning of April 21, 1994, Anna Molka Ahmed passed away.

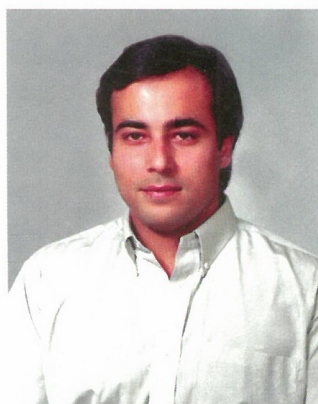
A decade later in 2004, Pakistan National Council of the Arts, held a retrospective exhibition of Anna Molka Ahmed's paintings at the Shakir Ali Museum, Lahore. Displaying a wide gamut of emotions and dominated by her love of the sun, the brilliant exhibition of 'Expressionistic Paintings', as Anna Molka had once described them, was a milestone in Pakistan's art history. It was a revelation to younger artists and those of the public who had never before seen a collection of the artists work assembled. From that time, there has been a renewed interest in her work shown by art collectors in the country and abroad.

Twelve years after Anna Molka's death a daughter was born to Zehertara, Anna Molka's great-granddaughter. She is named 'Anna' after her illustrious great-grandma and Tahira displays the baby's picture with pride and vows she is the image of her remarkable namesake. And the legend lives on...





Mrs. Tahira Ayaz and family.



Zarah's son Mark.

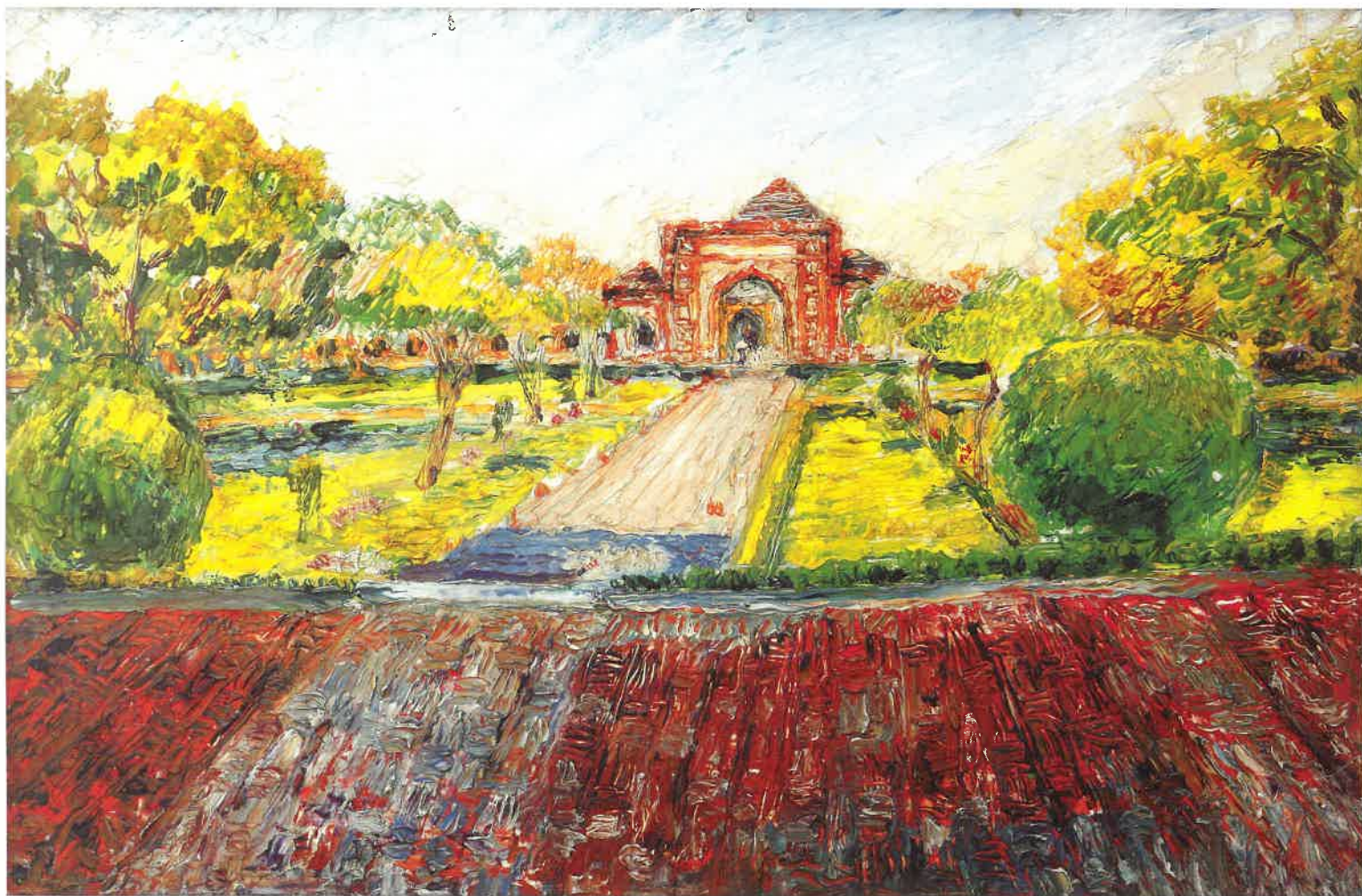


Mrs. Zarah David and family.

P a i n t i n g s

Author's Note:

We had a problem when attempting to accurately date the work as Anna Molka seldom added the date to her signature on the finished artwork. Eventually we decided to eschew dates, with the exception of a sequence of work that she specifically recorded. To mark her divorce in 1952, she painted three Surrealistic pieces full of pain and anguish and these she dated on the canvas.



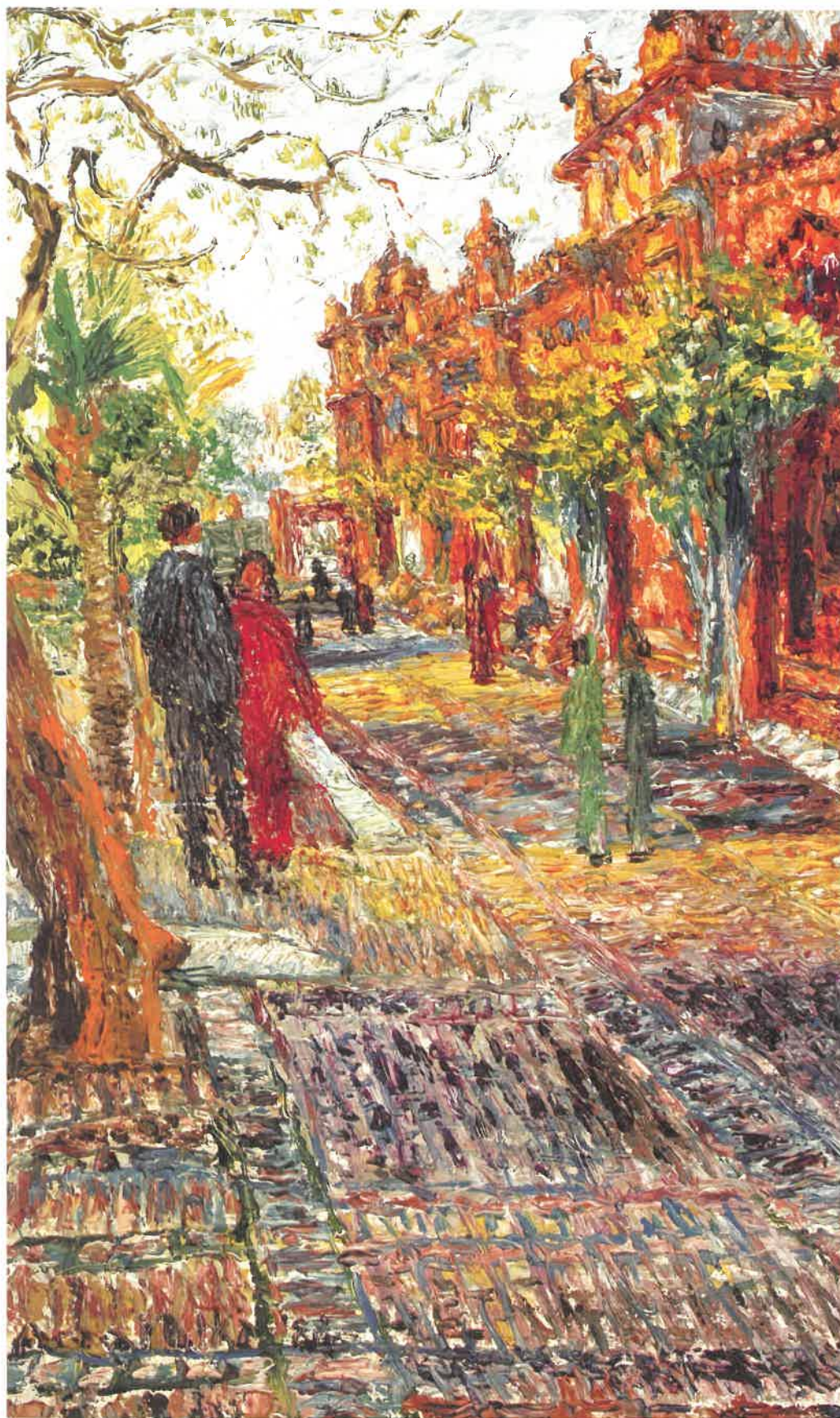
Asif Jah's Tomb.

oil on canvas 36" x 24"



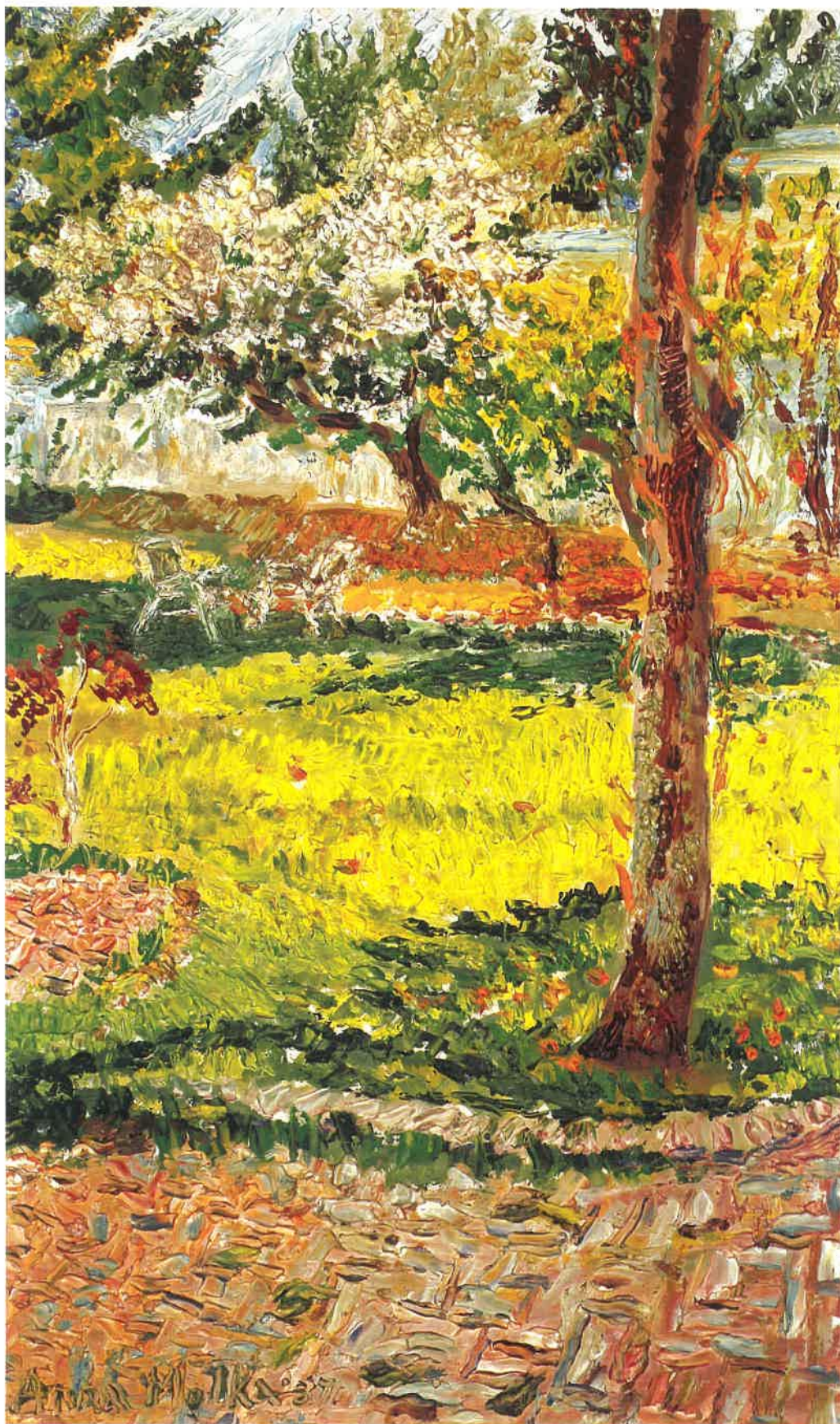
Composition

oil on canvas



View of the University

oil on hardboard 24" x 48"



Bougainvillea

oil on hardboard 24" x 48"



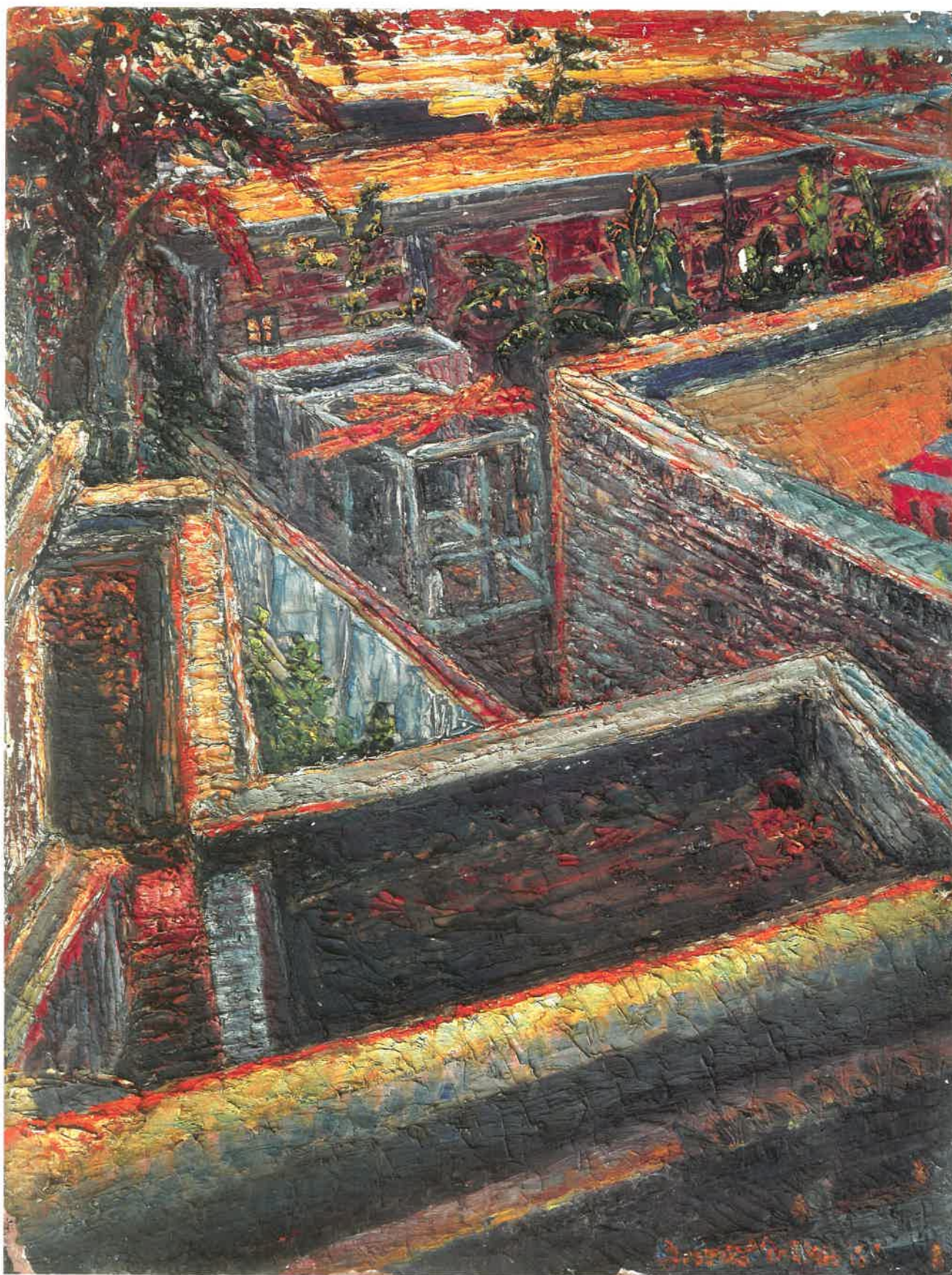


Punjab University
oil on canvas 36" x 60"



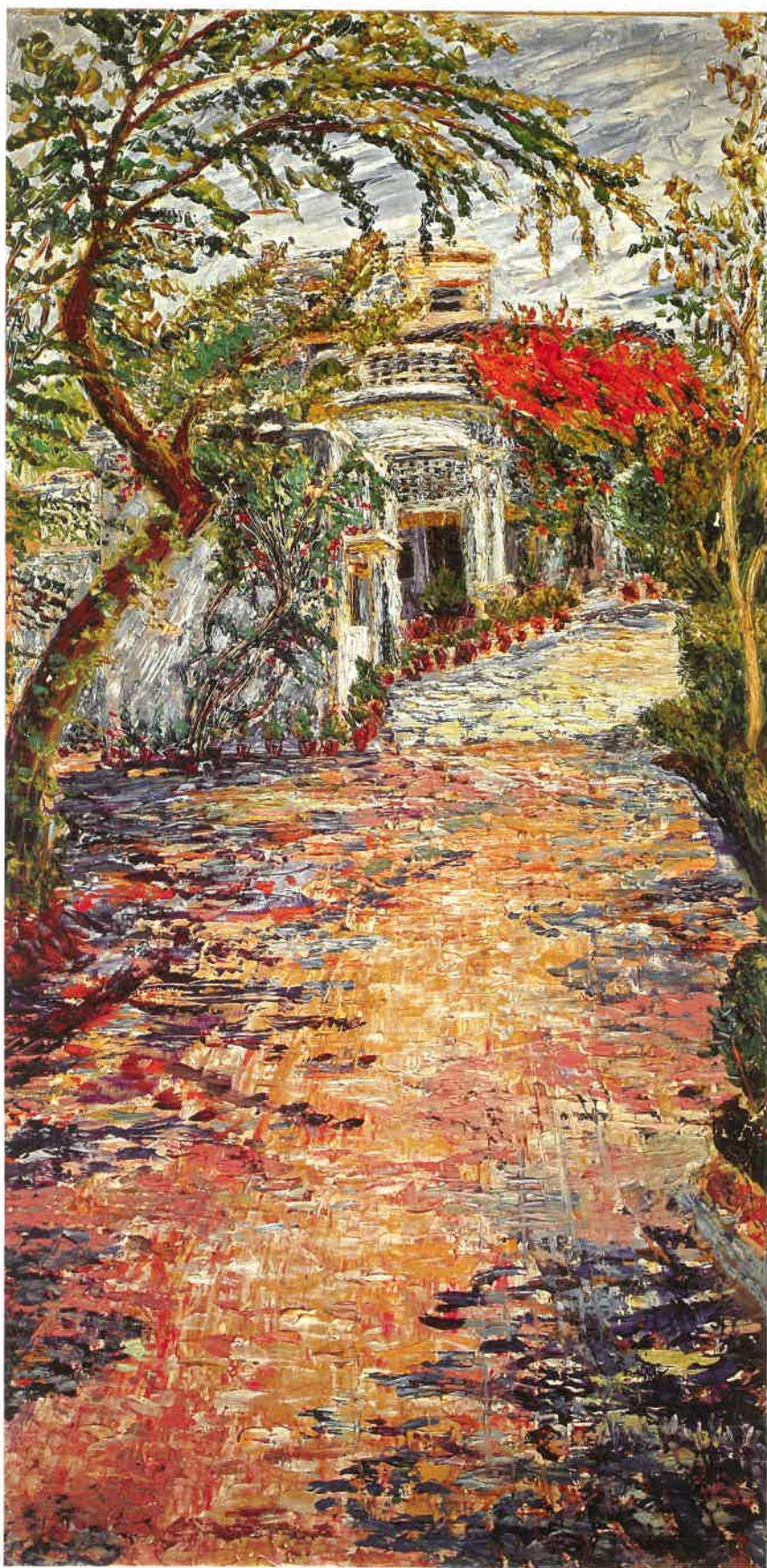
Tree of life

oil on canvas 24" x 48"



Roof tops

oil on hardboard 18"x 24"



My Home

oil on canvas



Murree Rooftops

oil on canvas 18" x 24"





Murree Mall
oil on canvas 30" x 48"



The Road

oil on canvas



Miniature: The Well.

gouache on wassli 6" x 12"



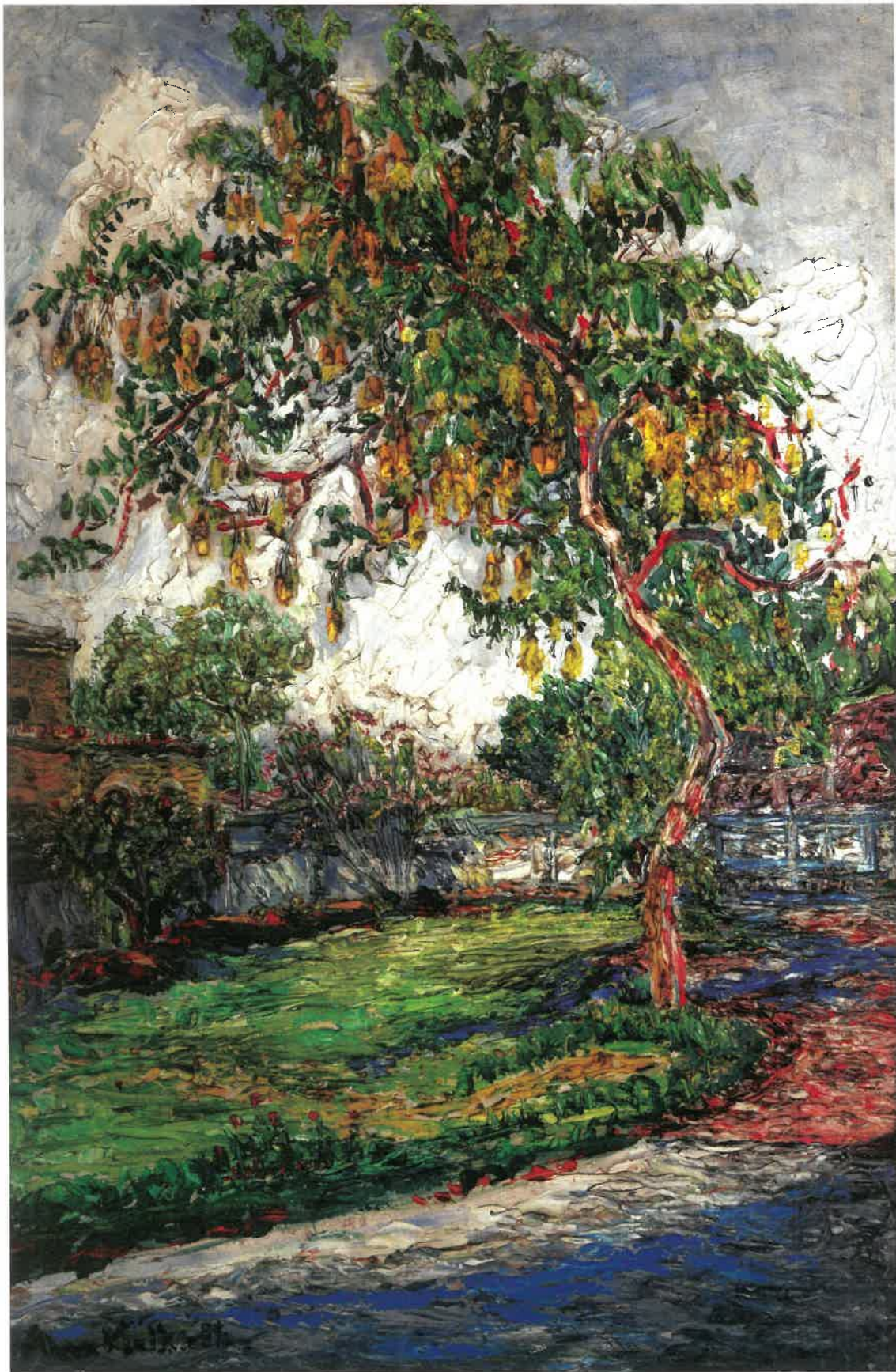


My Home
oil on hardboard 36" x 42"



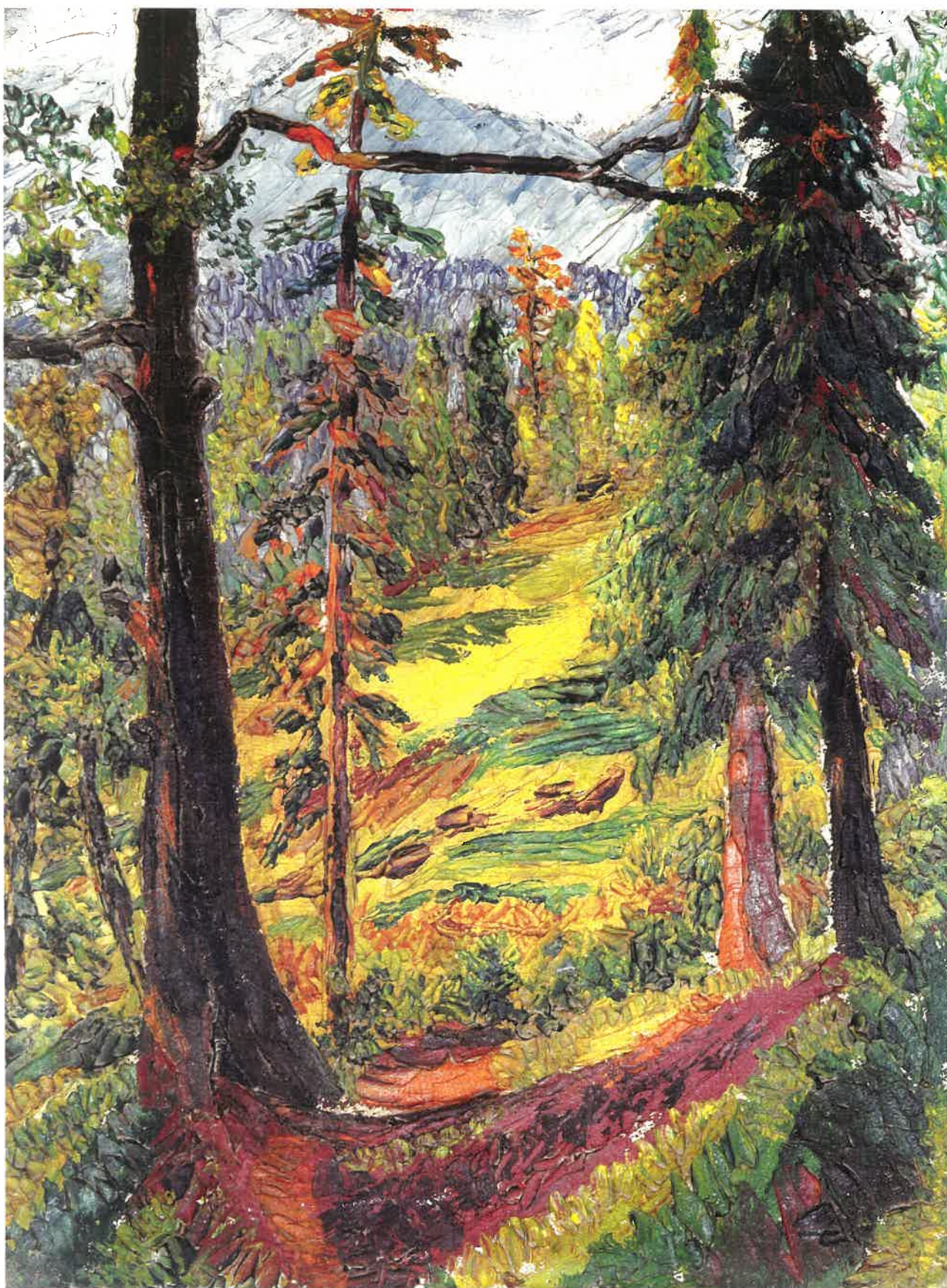
Kim's Gun

oil on canvas 30" x 48"



The Amultas Tree

oil on canvas 24" x 48"



Murree

oil on canvas 12" x 18"



Murree

oil on paper 12" x 15"



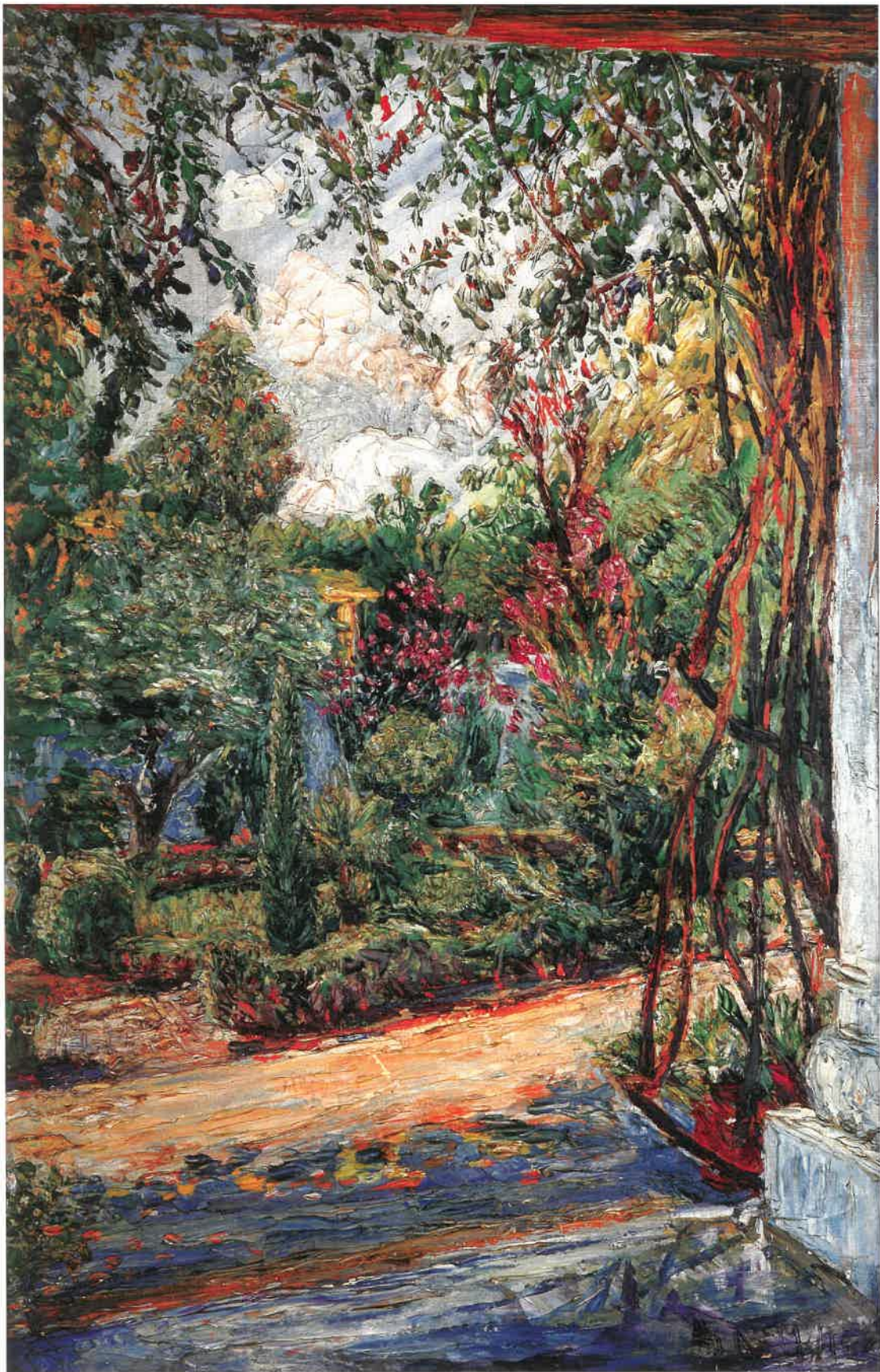
Murree

oil on paper 12" x 15"





Punjab Secretariat
oil on canvas 72" x 48"



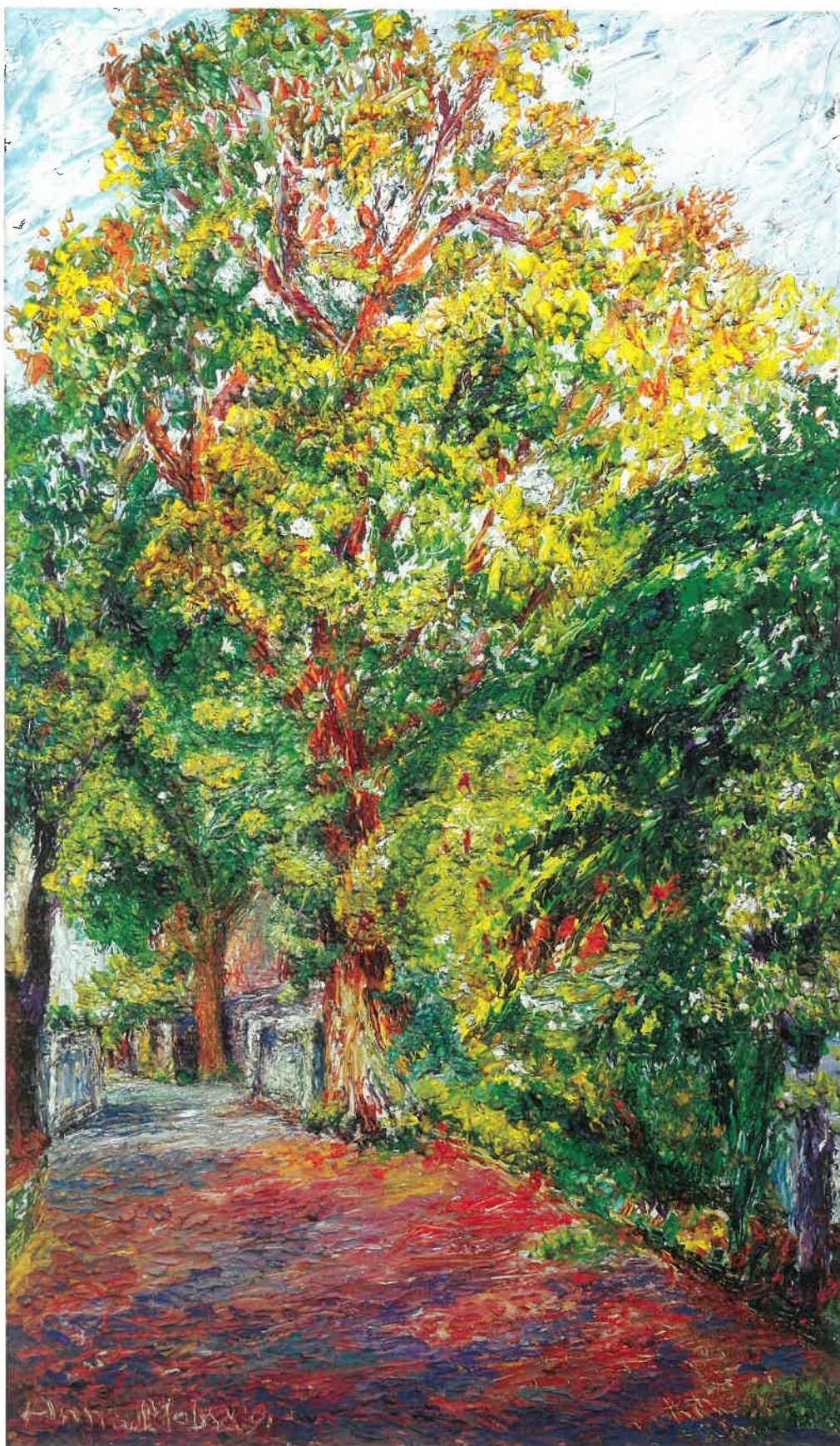
My Garden

oil on canvas 24" x 48"



Murree

oil on paper 24" x 18"



Trees

oil on canvas 18" x 30"



Siesta

mixed media 15" x 36"



Portrait of two sisters

oil on canvas 24" x 36"



Kohistan Man and Child

oil on canvas 18" x 24"



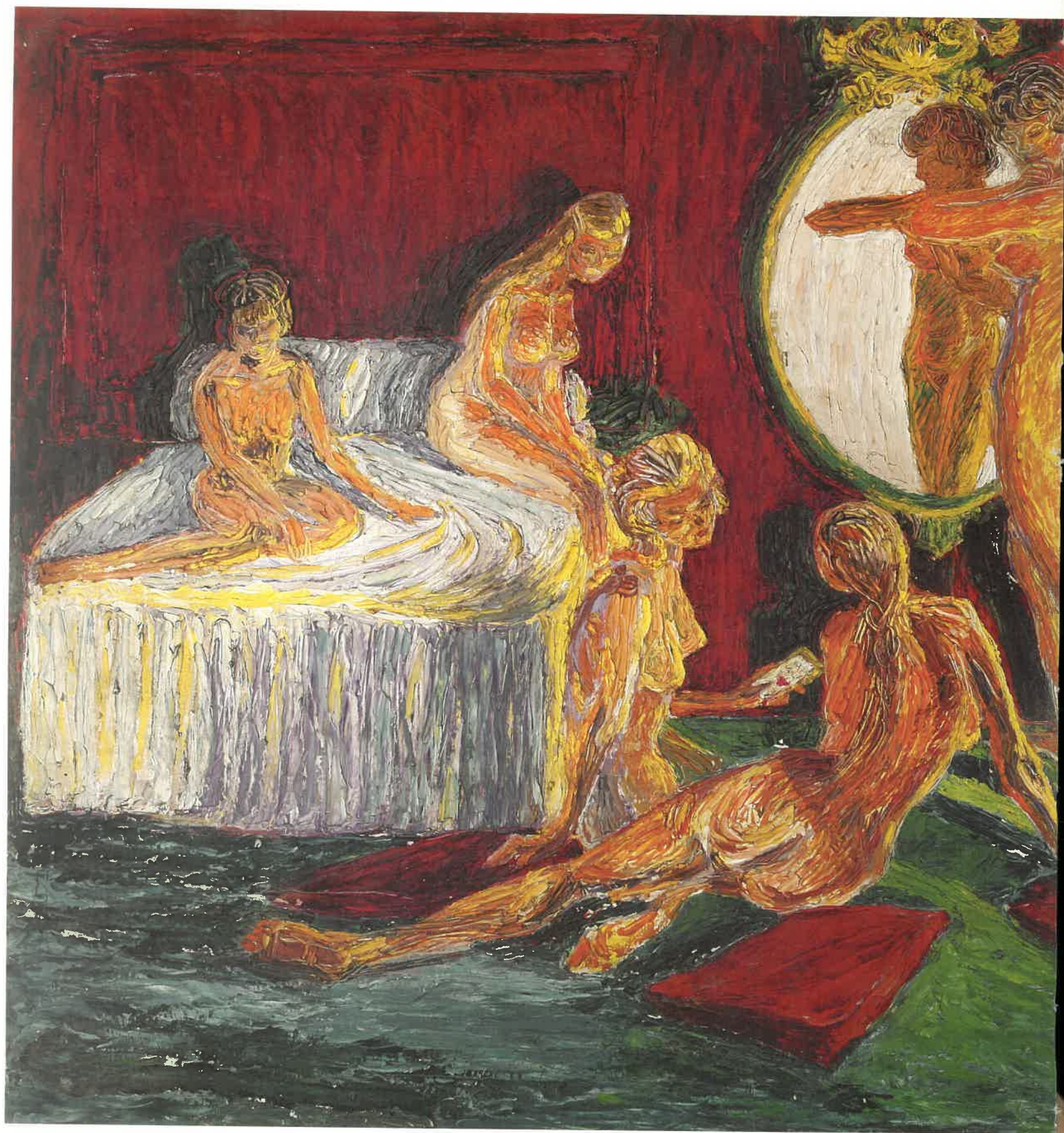
*Title: My Daughters
Portrait of Zarah & Tahira*

oil on canvas 18" x 24"



Portrait of Khalid Iqbal & Noor Alam

oil on paper





Conversation piece
oil on canvas 30" x 36"



Murree

oil on paper 12" x 15"



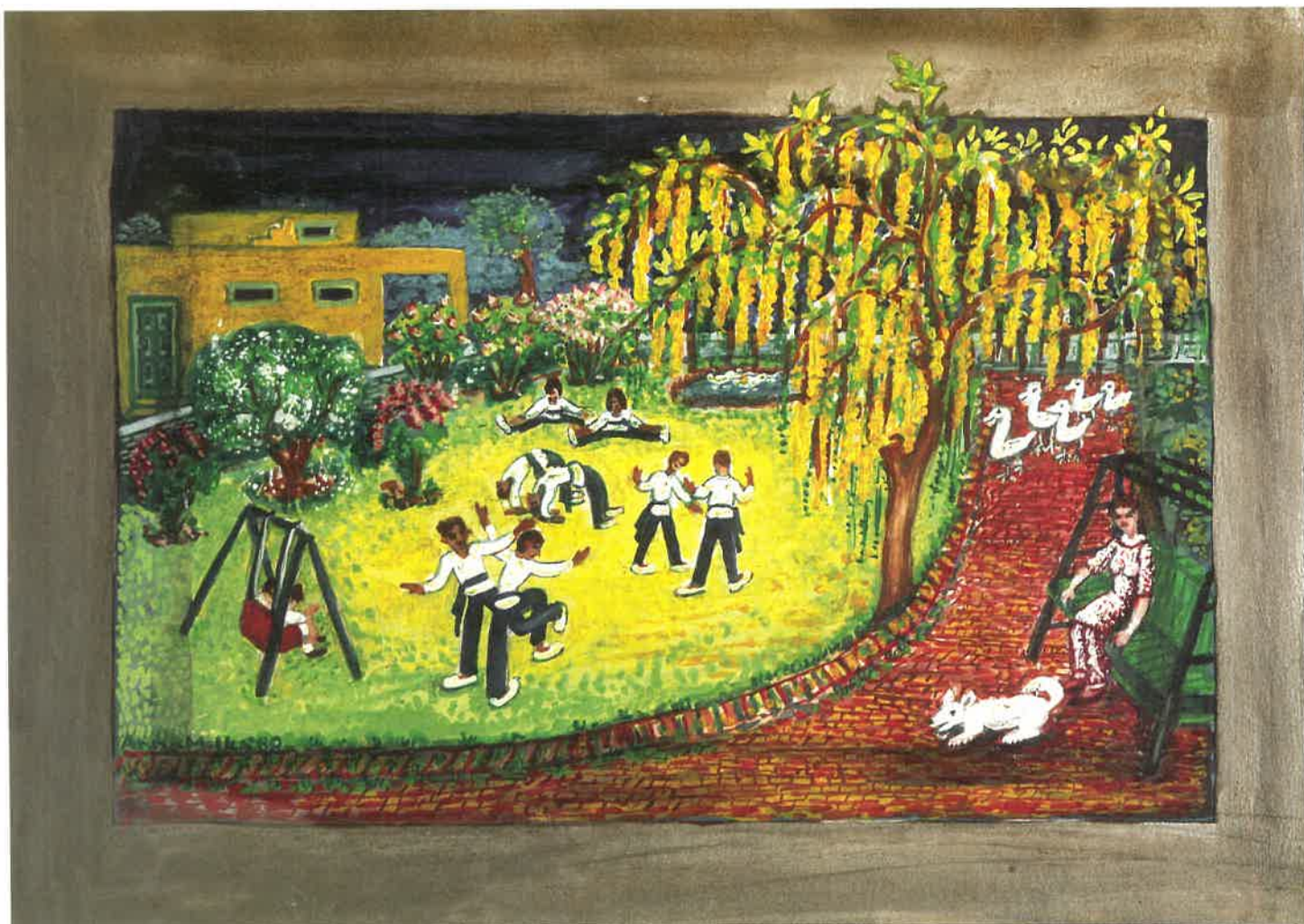
Murree

oil on paper



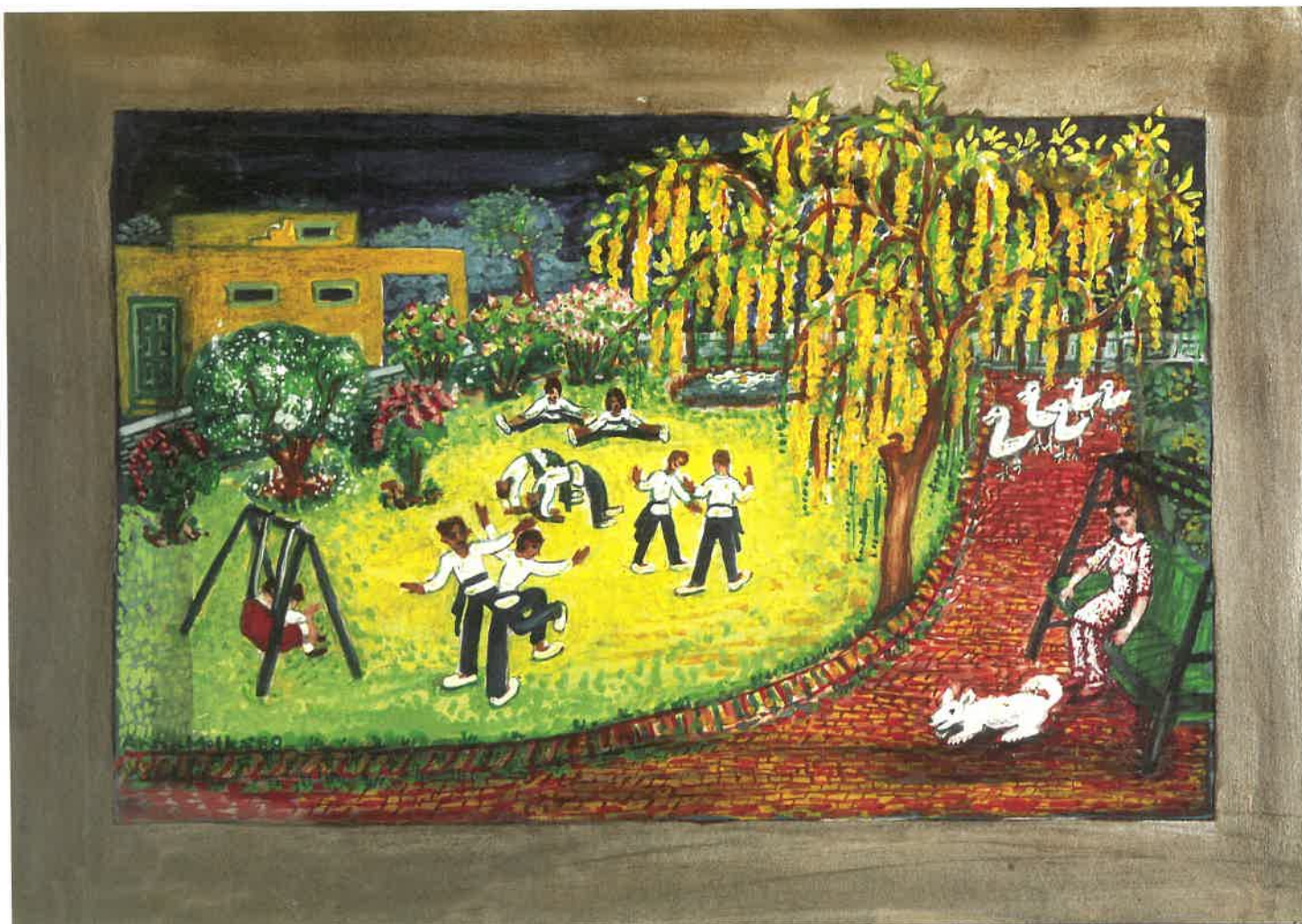
The Pakistani Farmer

oil on canvas 3' x 6'



Karate in the park.

gouache on wassli 6" x 12"



Karate in the park.

gouache on wassli 6" x 12"





Living Rubbish
oil on canvas 42" x 36"



Portrait of Quaid-e-Azam

oil on canvas 30" x 48"



Allama Iqbal

oil on canvas 30" x 48"



Portrait of Ch. Rahmat Ali

oil on canvas 20" x 26"



Faiz Ahmed Faiz

oil on canvas 24" x 30"



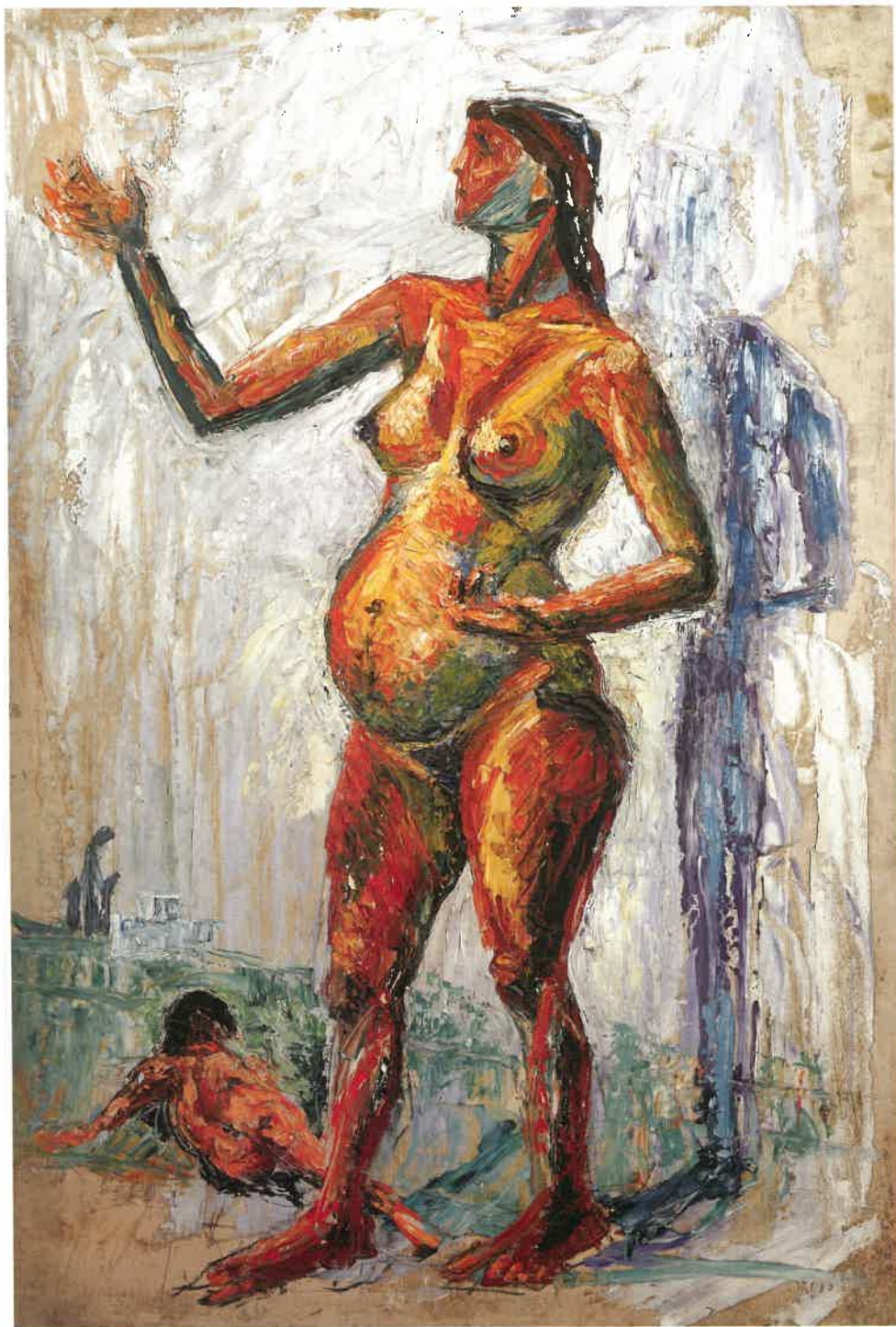
Portrait of Colin David

oil on canvas 24" x 36"



Portrait of Moyene Najmi

oil on canvas 18" x 24"



Composition with nude

oil on canvas 30" x 36"



Composition with nude

oil on canvas 30" x 36"



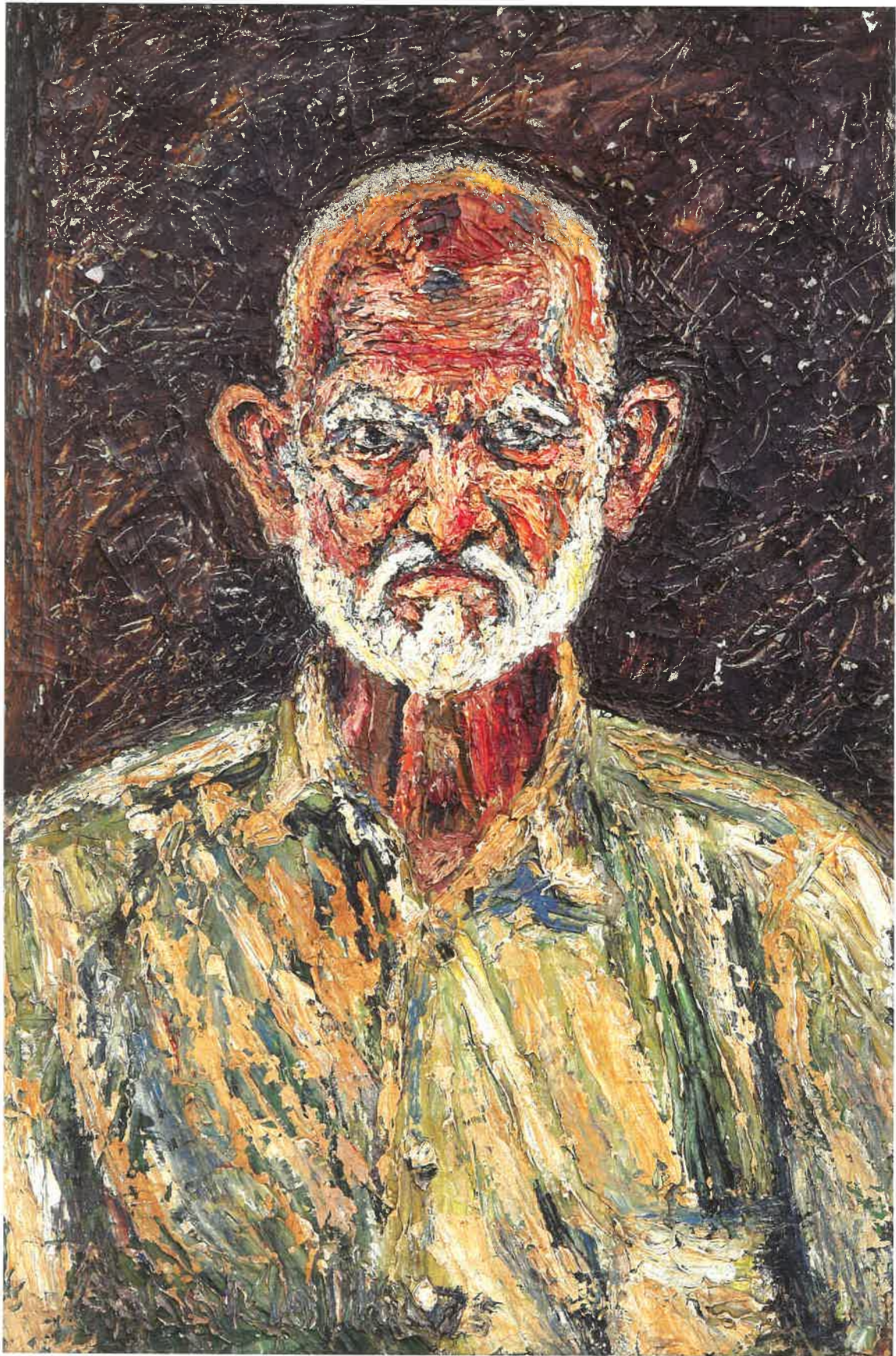


The card players: Moyene, Burki and Khalid.
oil on canvas 24" x 36"



Death and the Spirit

oil on canvas 30" x 40"



Baba

oil on canvas 24" x 36"



My grand daughter Zartara

oil on canvas 18" x 24"



My grand son Omair

oil on canvas 18" x 30"



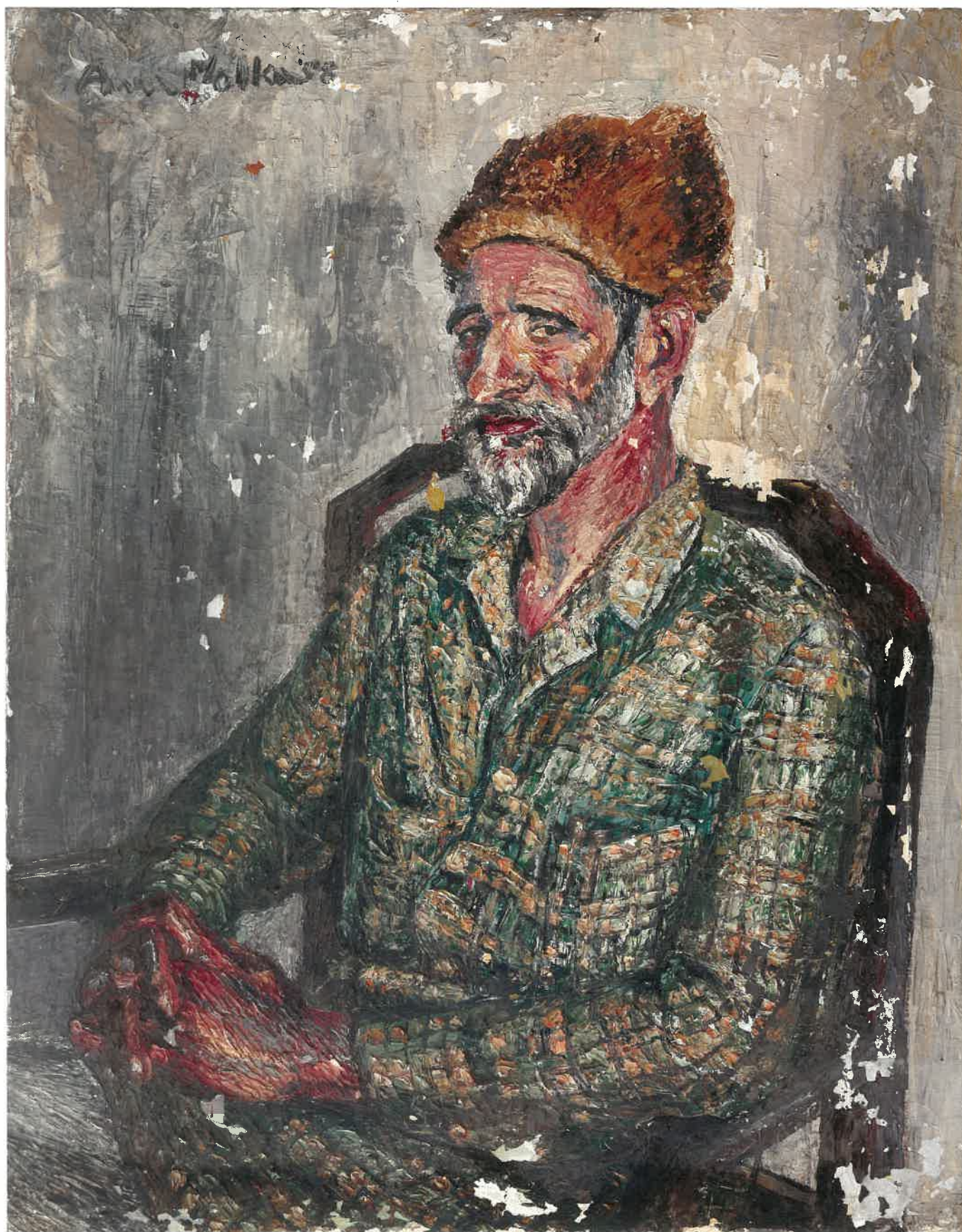


Siesta
oil on hardboard 18" x 24"



My daughter Tahira

pastels on paper 18" x 24"



The Sufi

oil on hardboard 18" x 24"



Portrait: Anna Molka's mother

oil on canvas 24" x 36"



Portrait of Mian Afzal Hussain

pastels on paper 12" x 18"



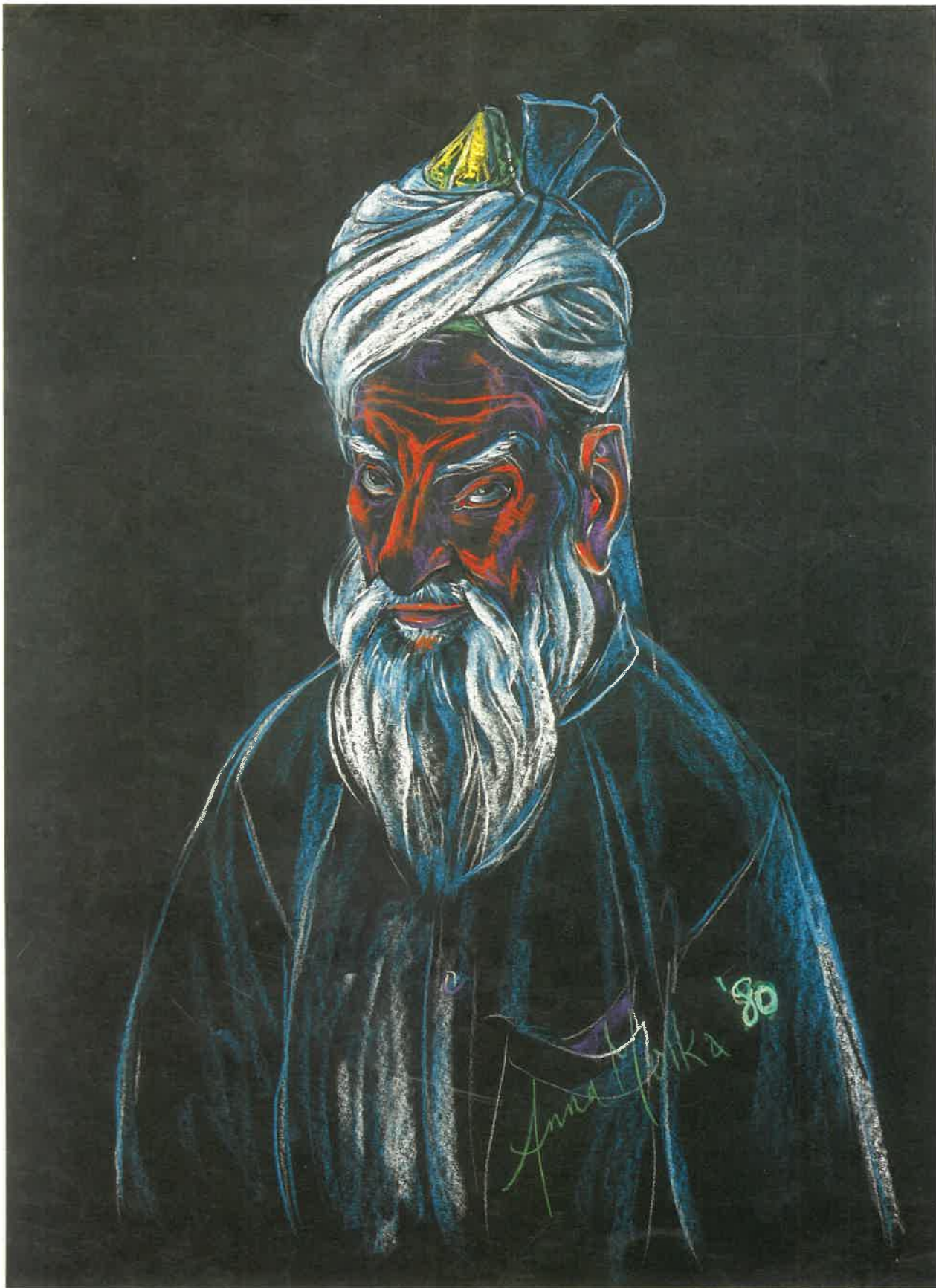
Old woman in Burqa

pastel drawing 20" x 30"



Nasreen

pastel drawing 15" x 20"



Baba

pastel drawing 15" x 20"



Blind Hafiz

oil on canvas 30" x 48"





Sajanagar Kashmir
oil on paper 15" x 24"



Why

18" x 42"



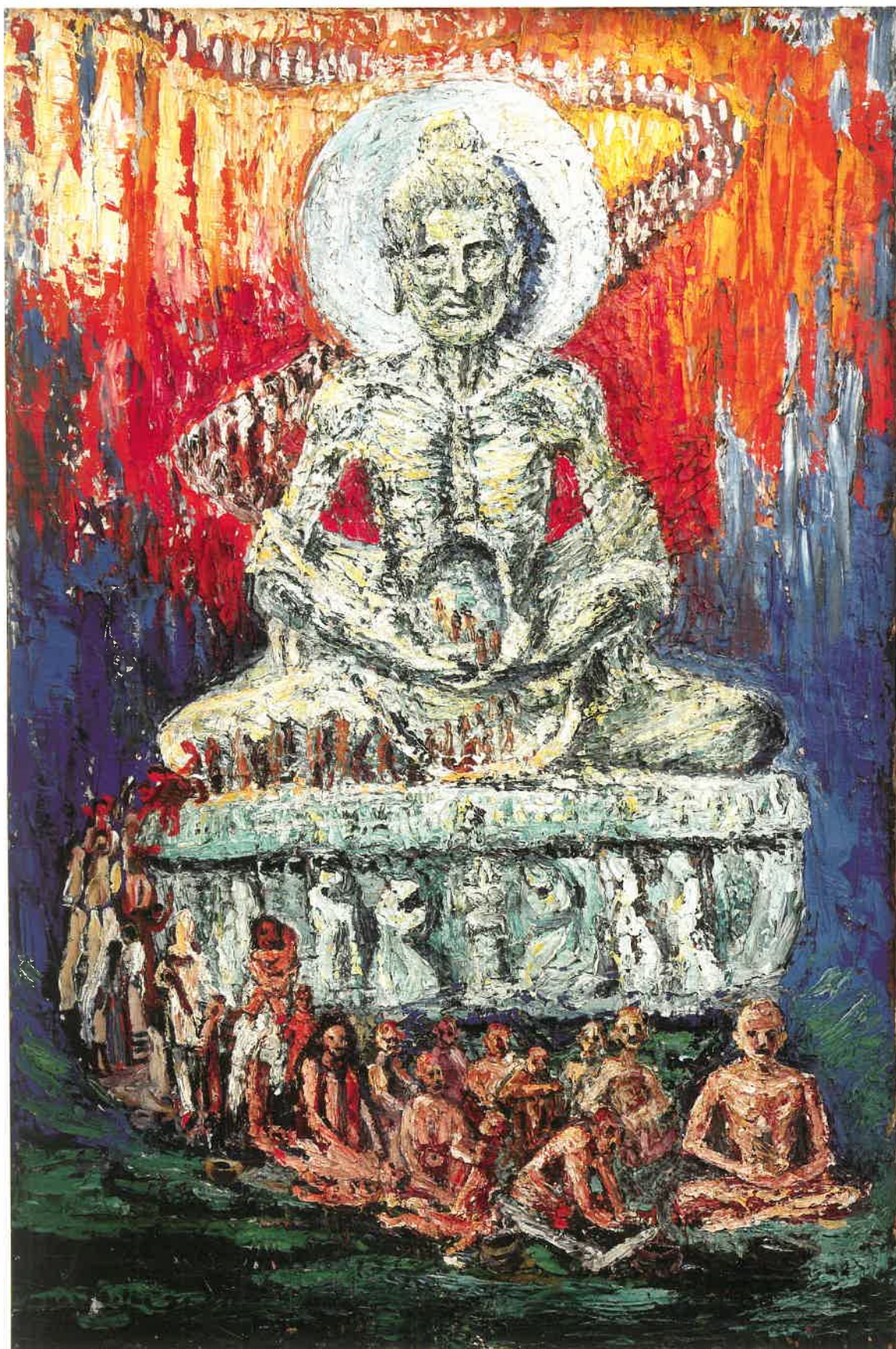
Worry

oil on canvas 18" x 42"



The flood

oil on canvas 30" x 36"



Attaining Nirvana

oil on canvas 24" x 36"



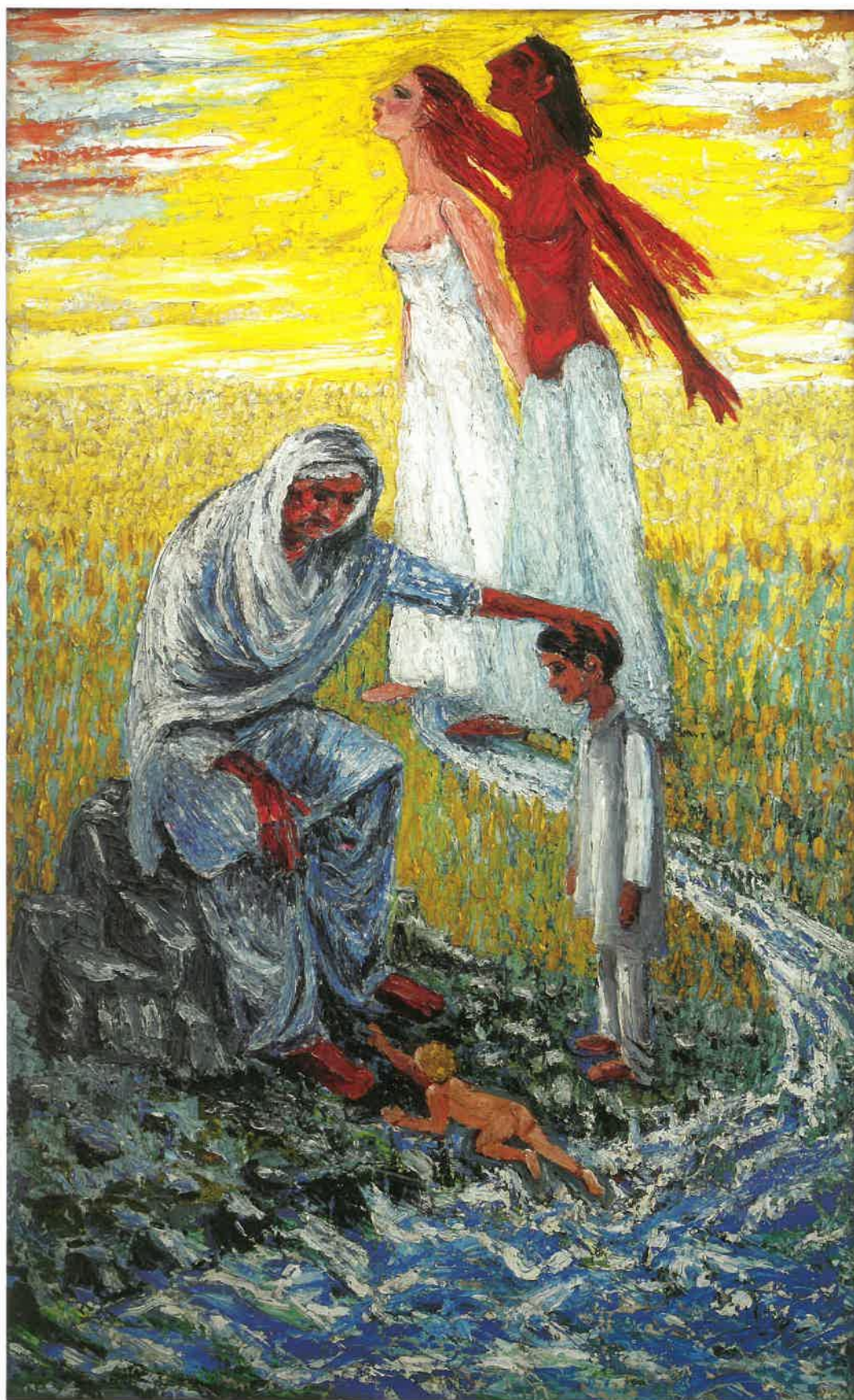


Safah-o-Marwa
oil on canvas 30" x 48"



Whither

oil on canvas 30" x 48"



The Circle of Life

oil on canvas 30" x 48"



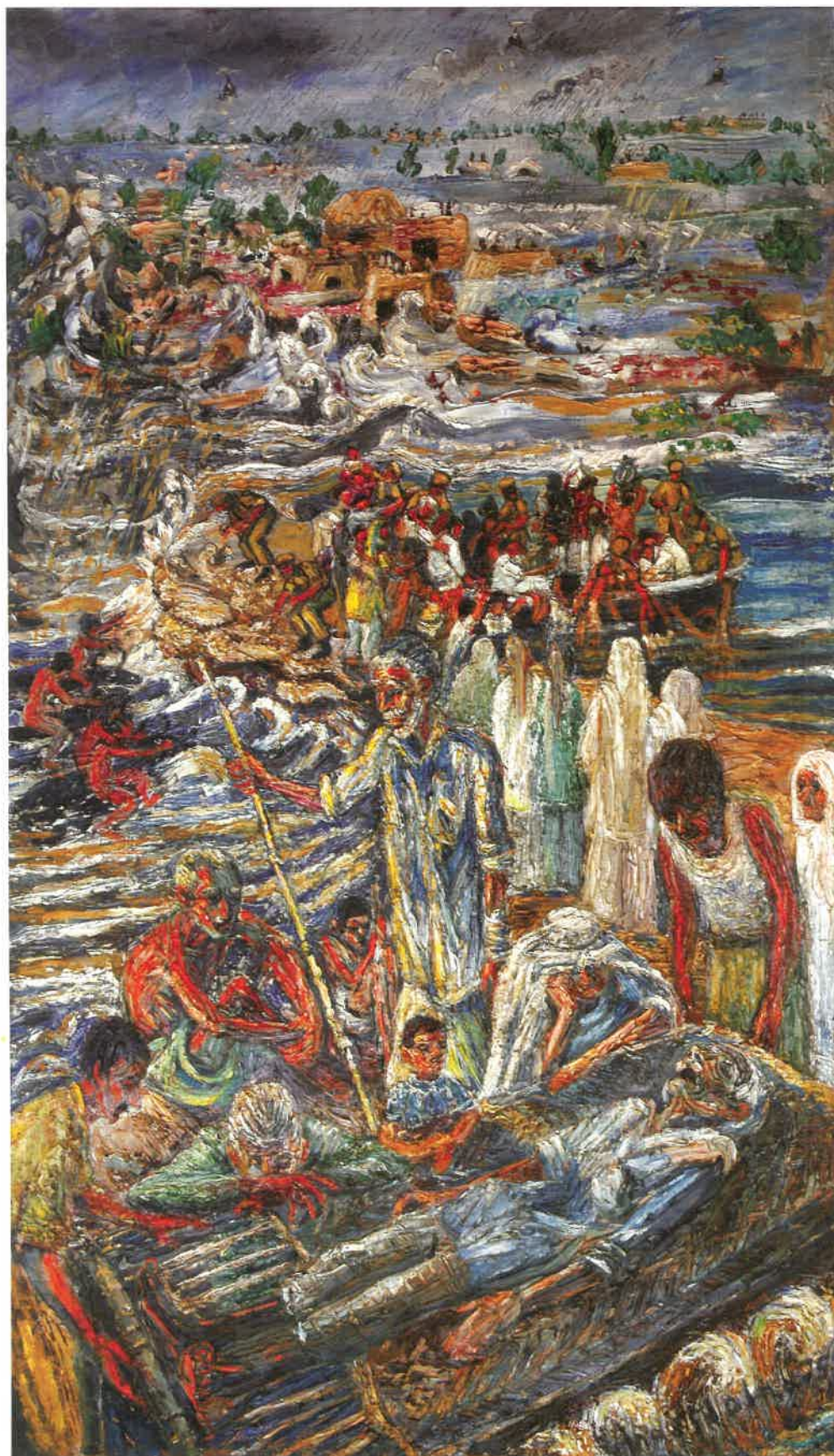
Mourners

oil on hardboard 24" x 36"



Kali Devi

oil on canvas 18" x 48"



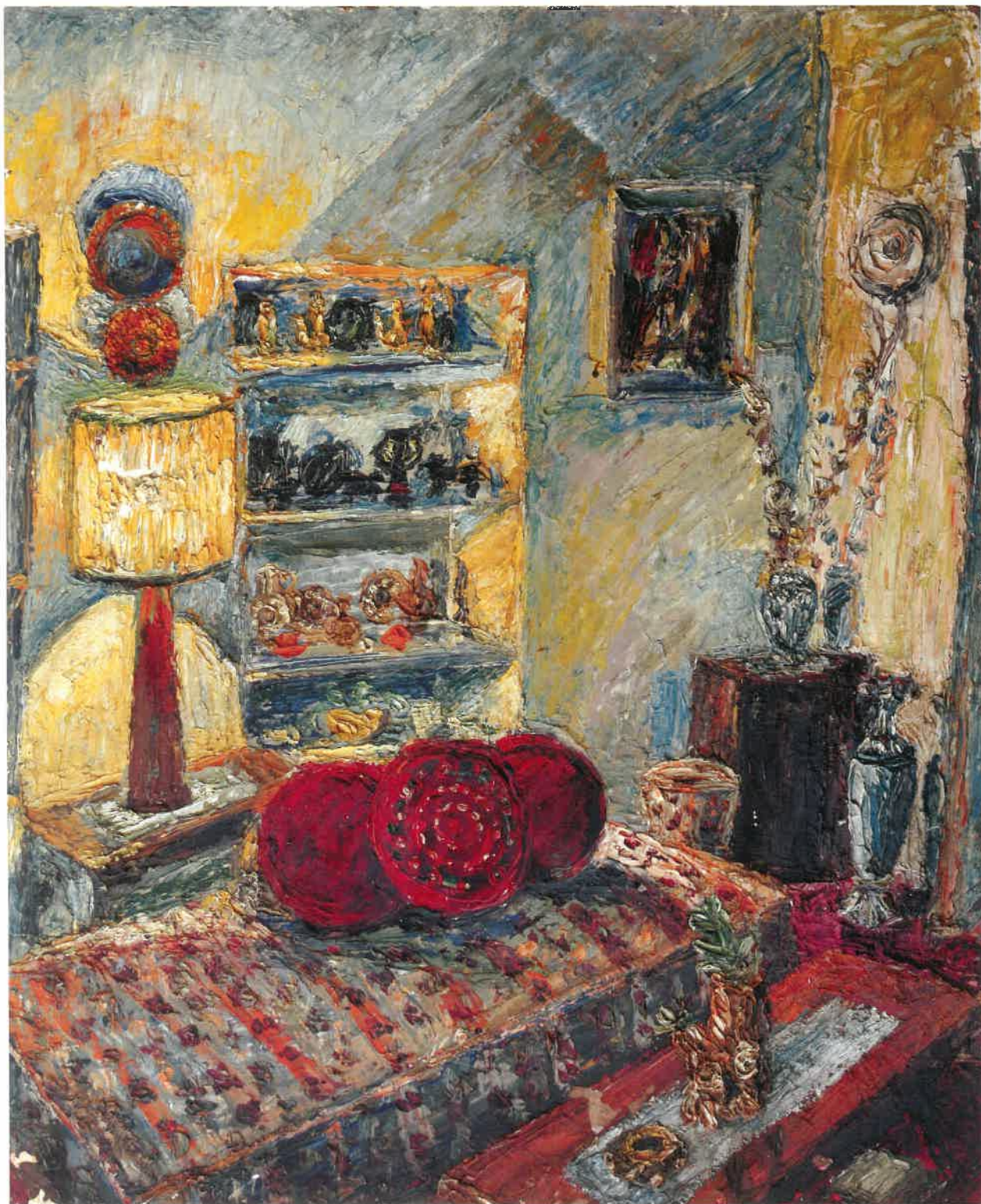
The flood

oil on canvas 36" x 60"



Hell (small version)

oil on hardboard 18" x 30"



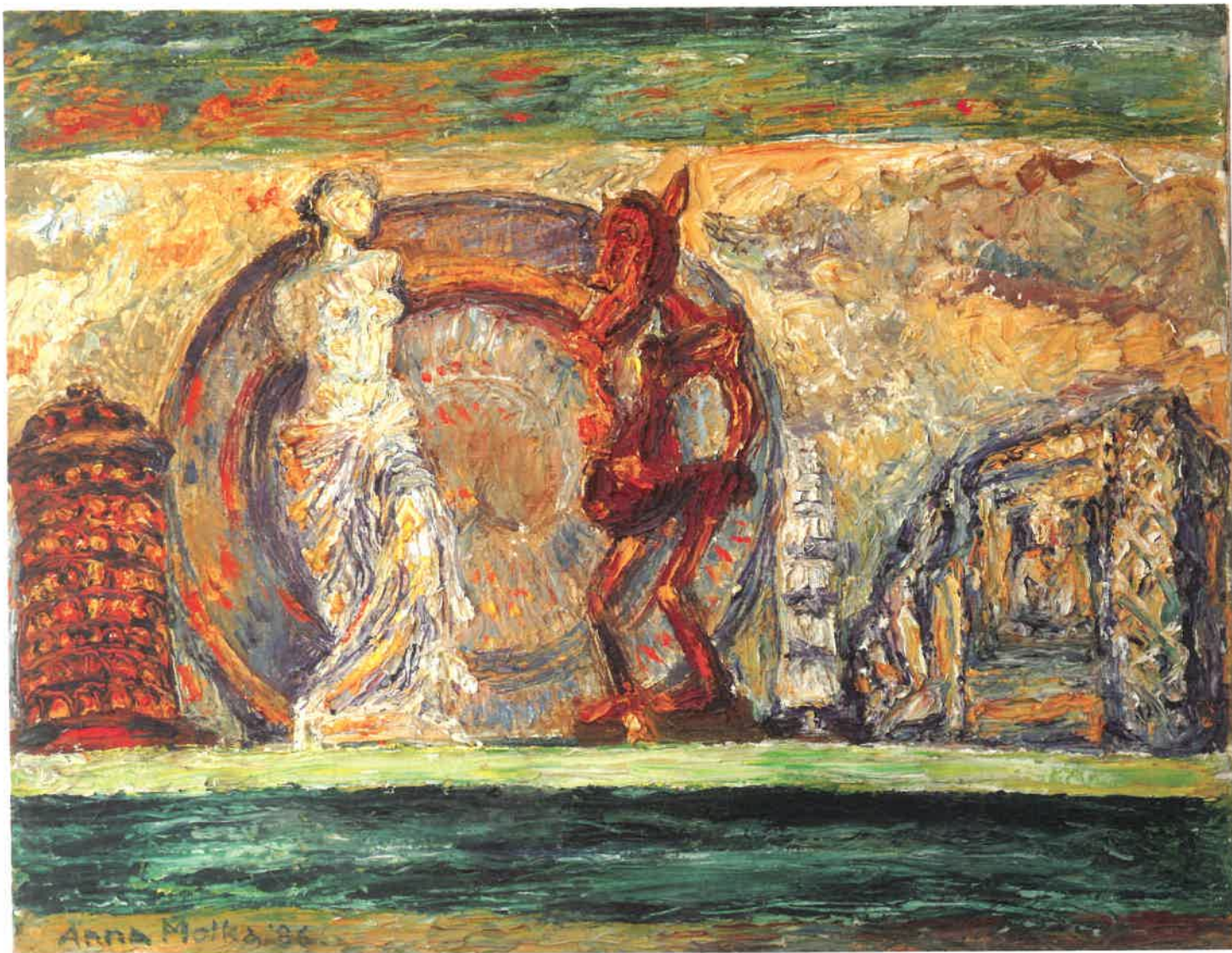
Still life with cushions

oil on canvas 24" x 30"



Still life with pots

oil on canvas 18" x 24"



Still Life with ornaments

oil on canvas 18" x 30"



Still life: Interior

oil on canvas 18" x 30"



Still life with Pots

oil on hardboard 18" x 24"



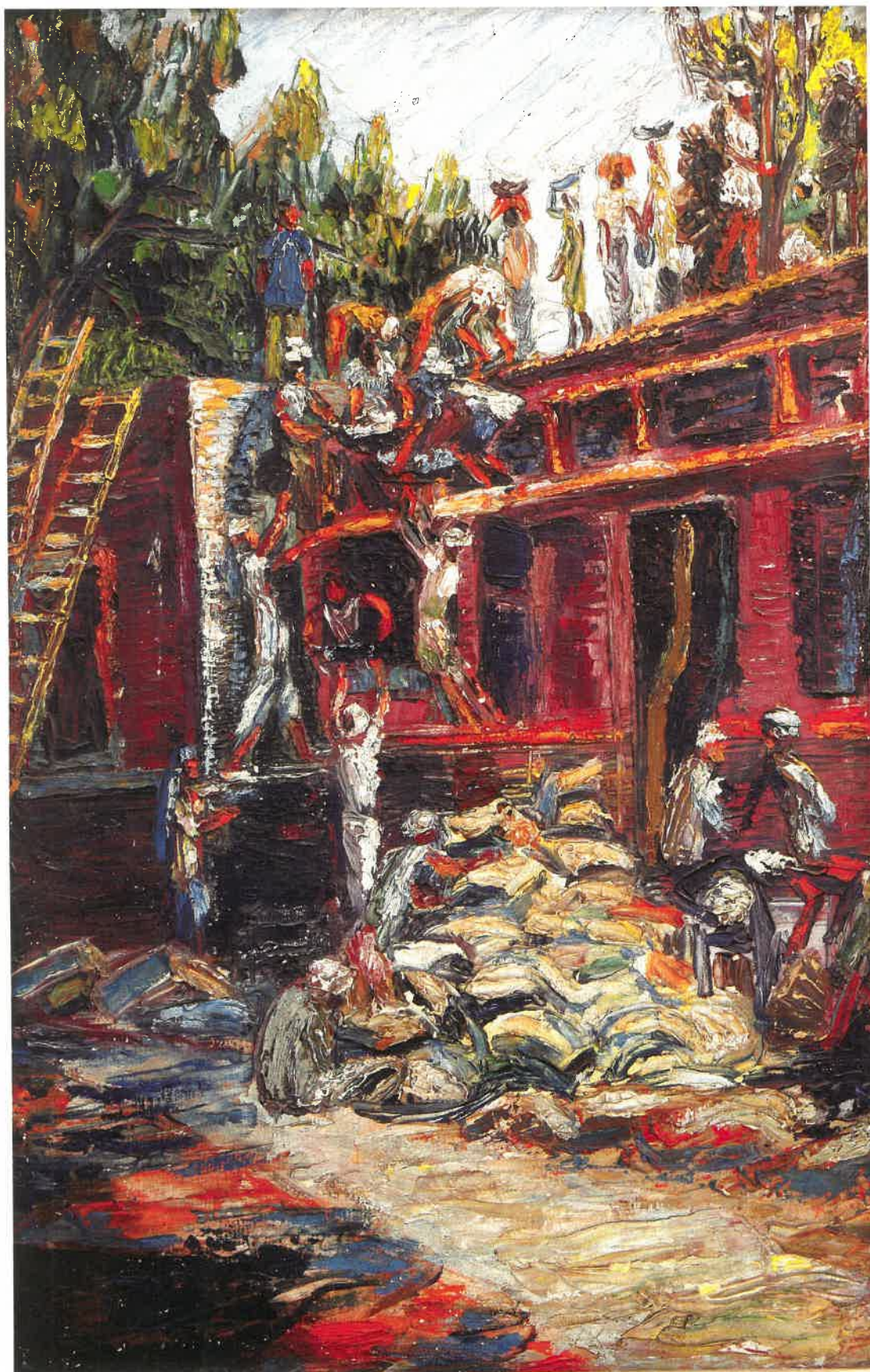
Still life with flowers

oil on canvas 24" x 30"



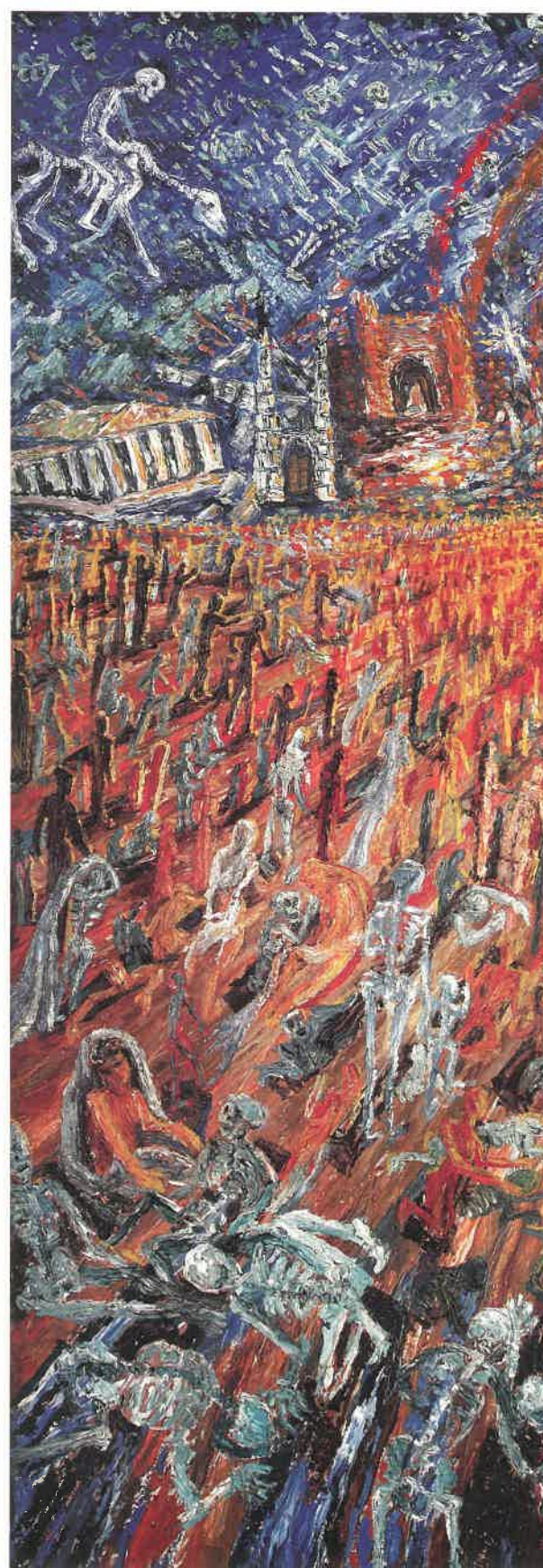
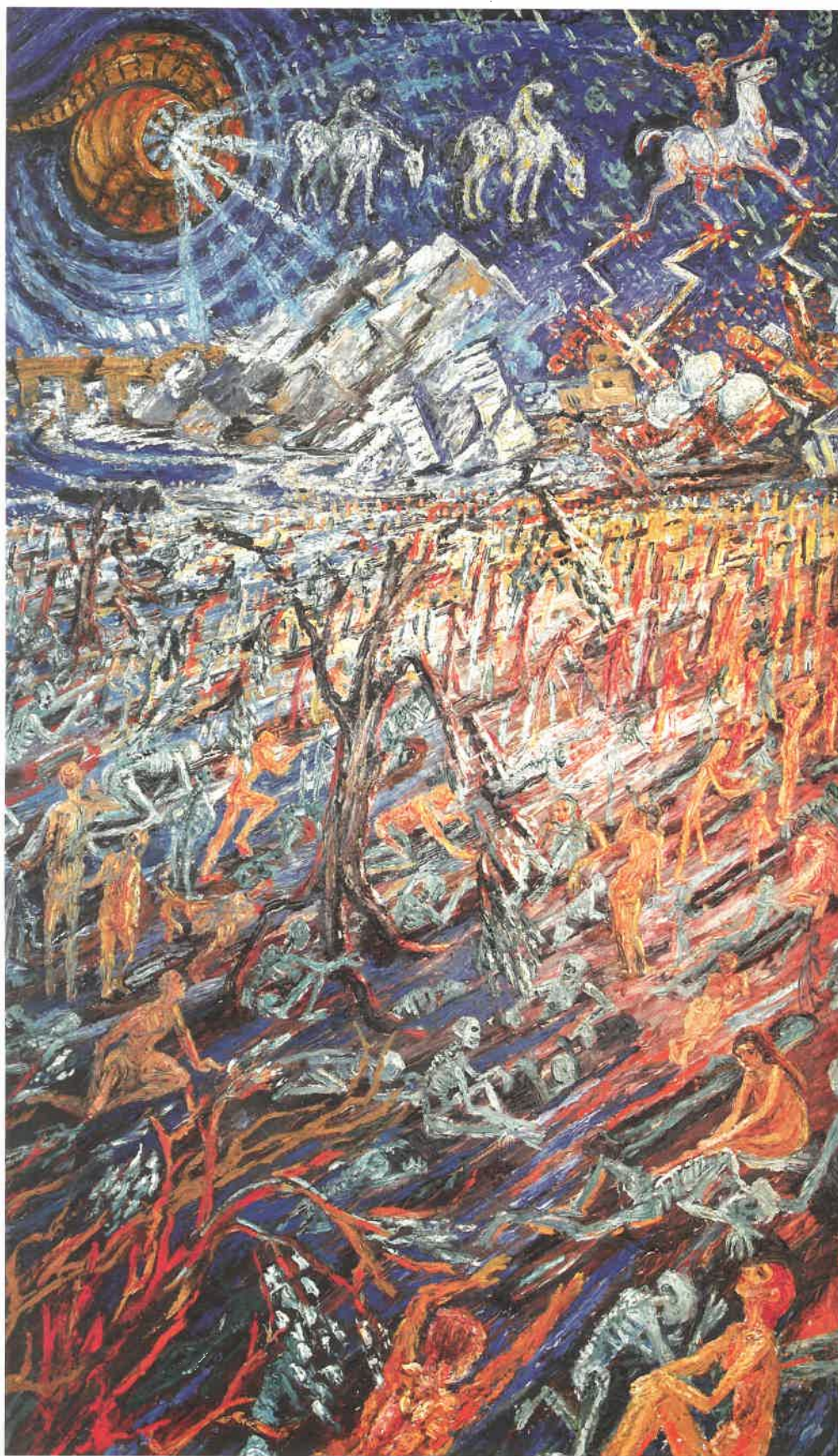
Woman Cooking

oil on canvas 18" x 30"

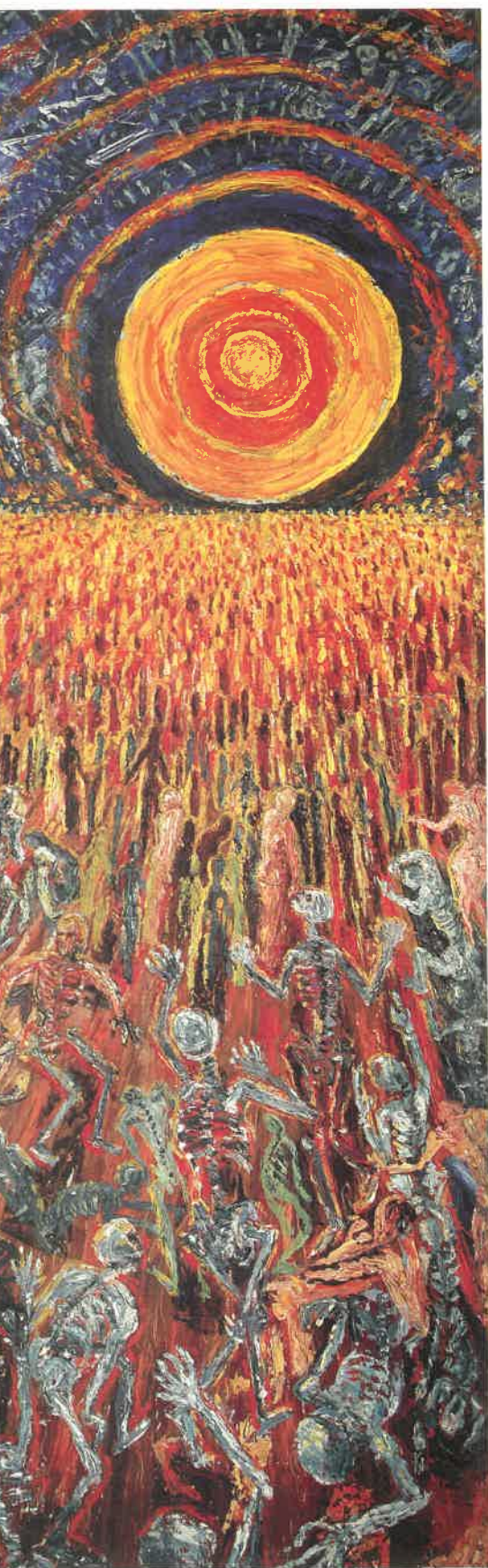


The Builders

oil on canvas 18" x 36"



"Qiyamat" Day of Resurrection



oil painting on canvas 198" x 108"



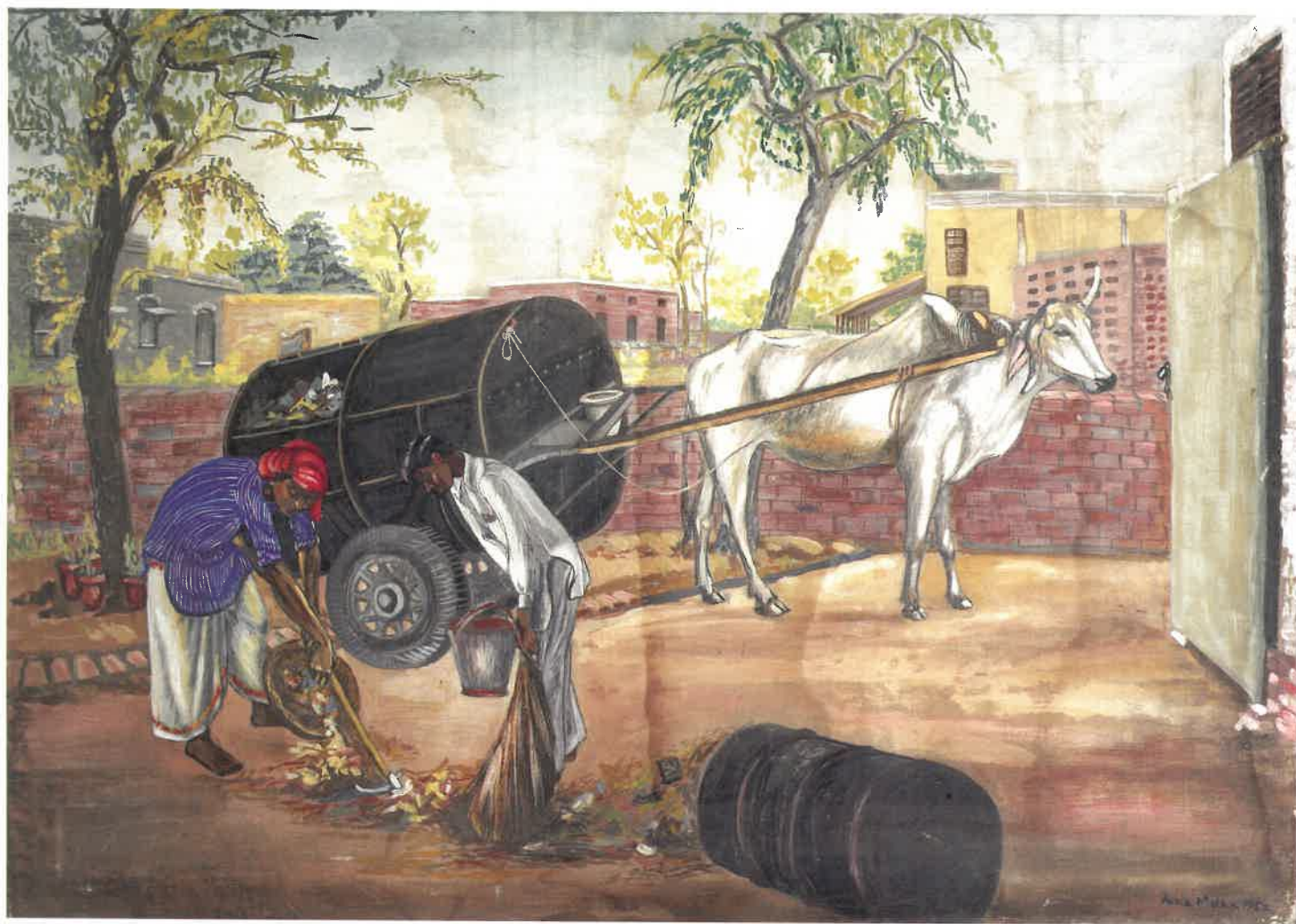
String Puppets

oil on canvas 18" x 24"



Resting

oil on canvas 18" x 24"



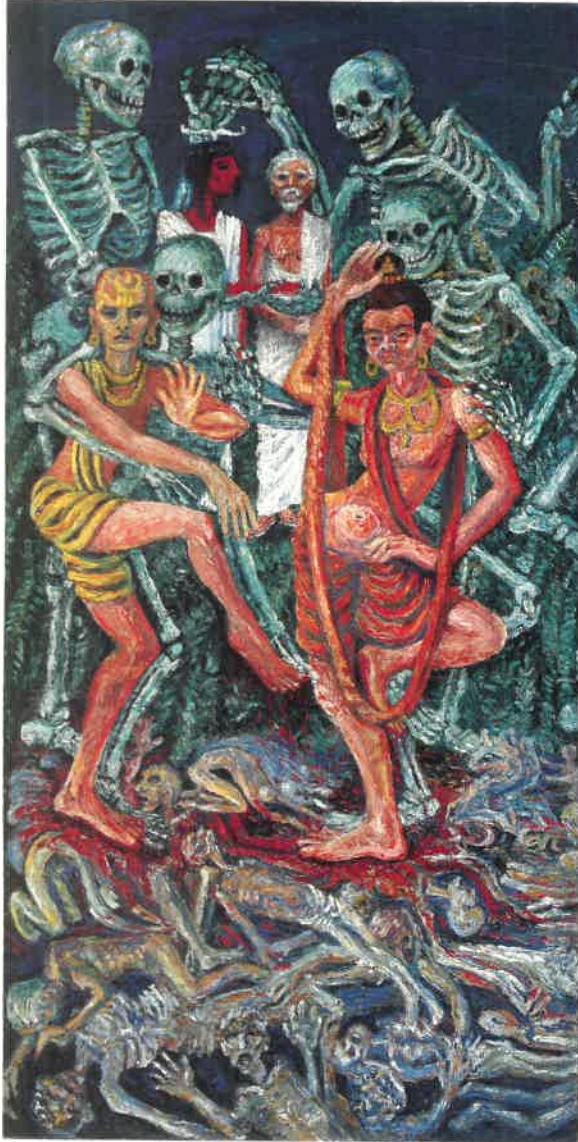
The Garbage Collectors

oil on canvas 36" x 24"

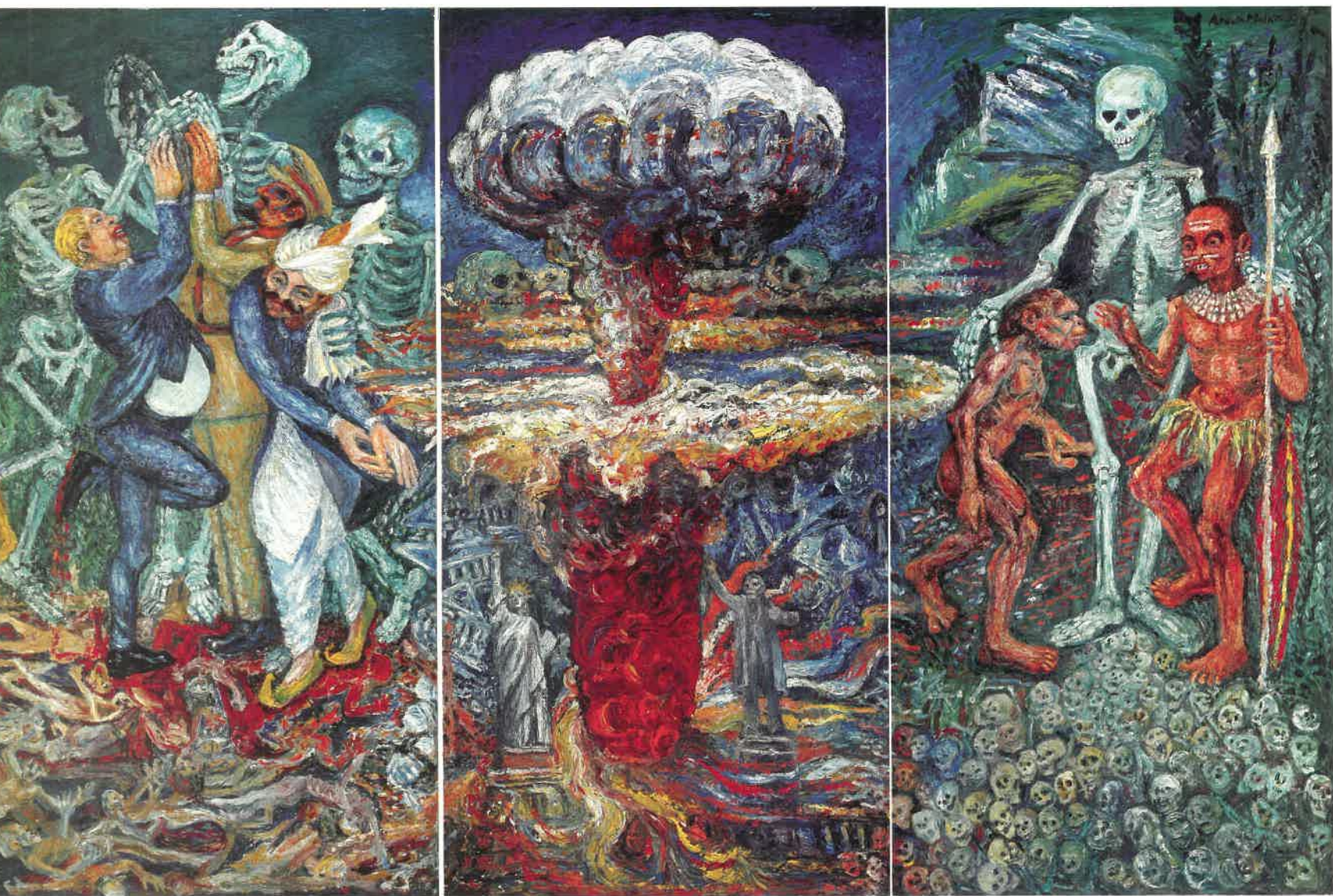


Women Cooking

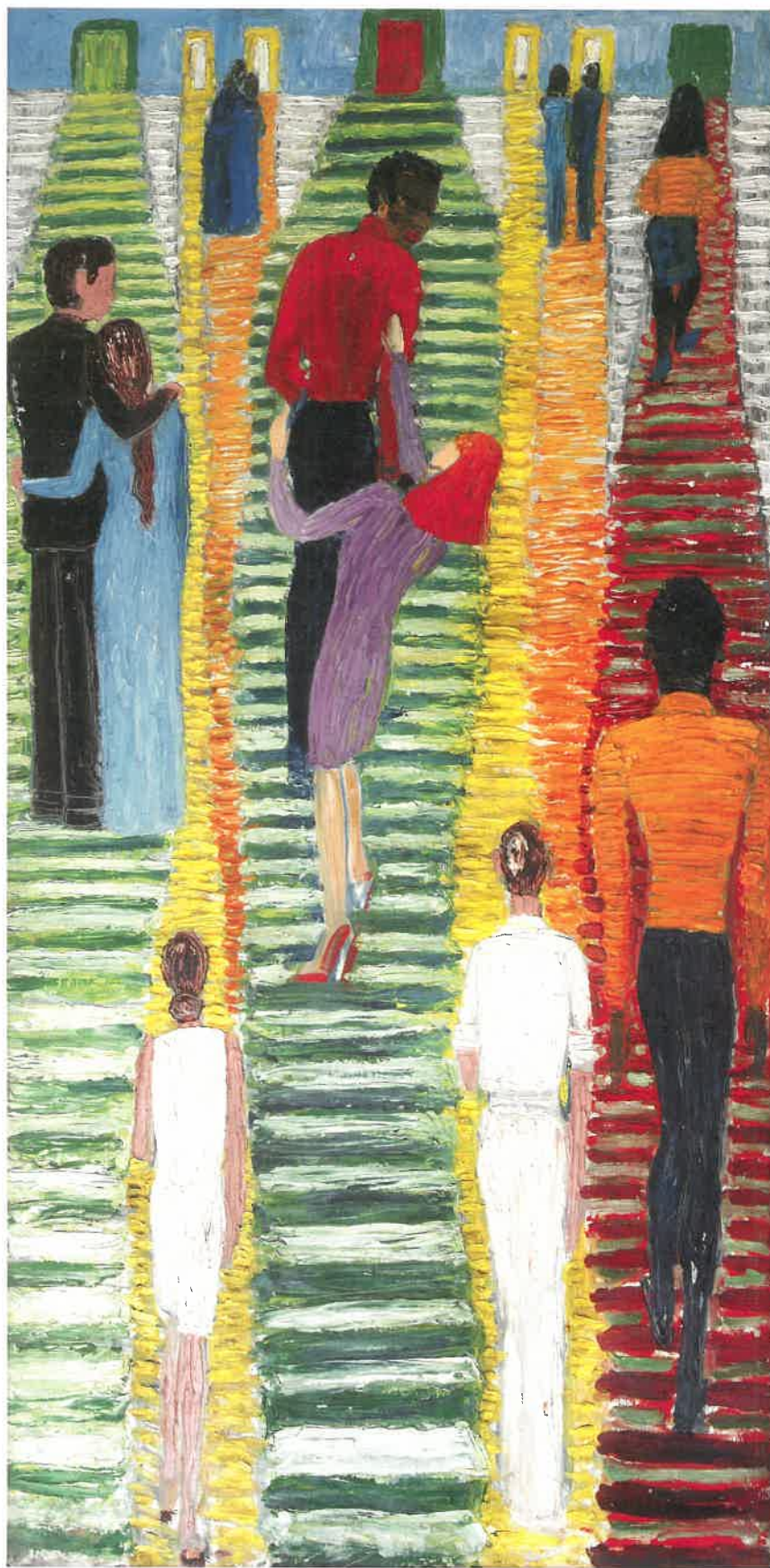
pastel drawing 18" x 24"



Collection of PNCA: Dance of Death



Oil painting on canvas (96" x 48")



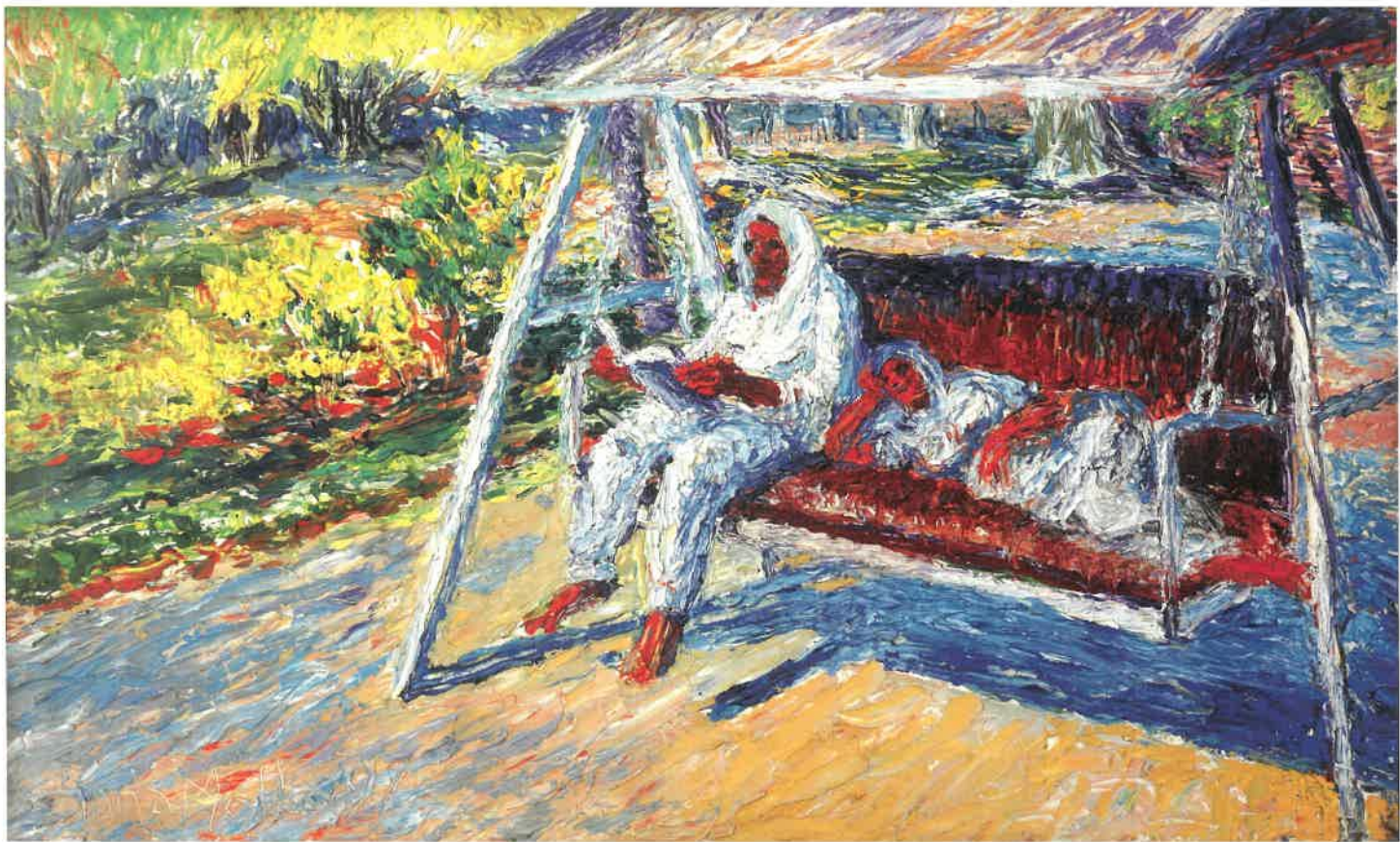
The party

oil on canvas 24" x 48"



Nila Gumbath 1949

oil on canvas 15" x 12"



Woman on swing

oil on canvas 18" x 24"



Paper Horses

oil on canvas 15" x 36"



Basant

mixed media on paper 6" x 12"



Landscape

mix media on paper 6" x 18"



Miniature: Amultas

mix media on paper 6" x 12"



Miniature: Alone

mix media on paper 6" x 12"



Hell

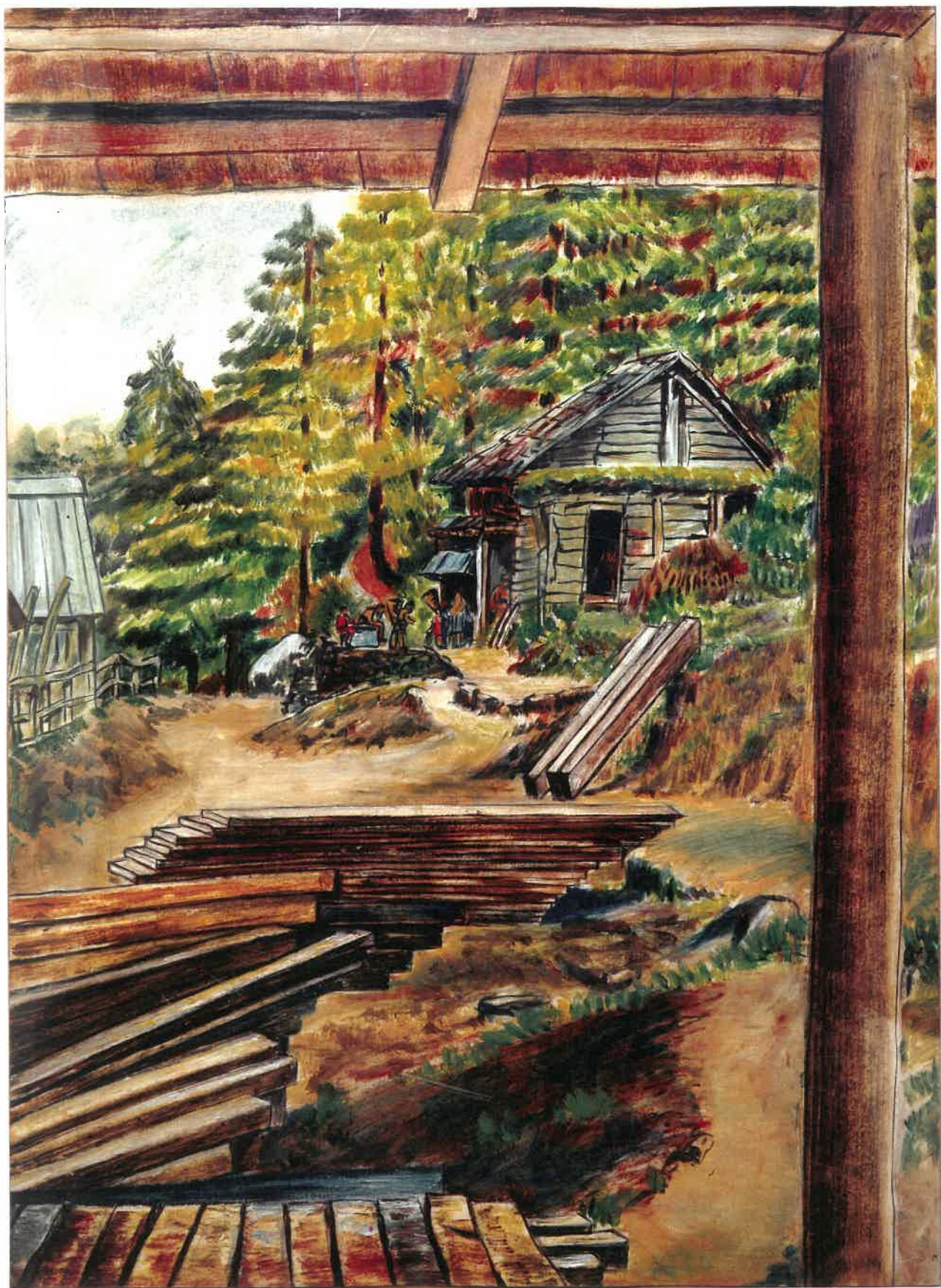


Oil painting on canvas 108" x 66"



Miniature: Marwa Tree

mixed media on paper 6" x 12"



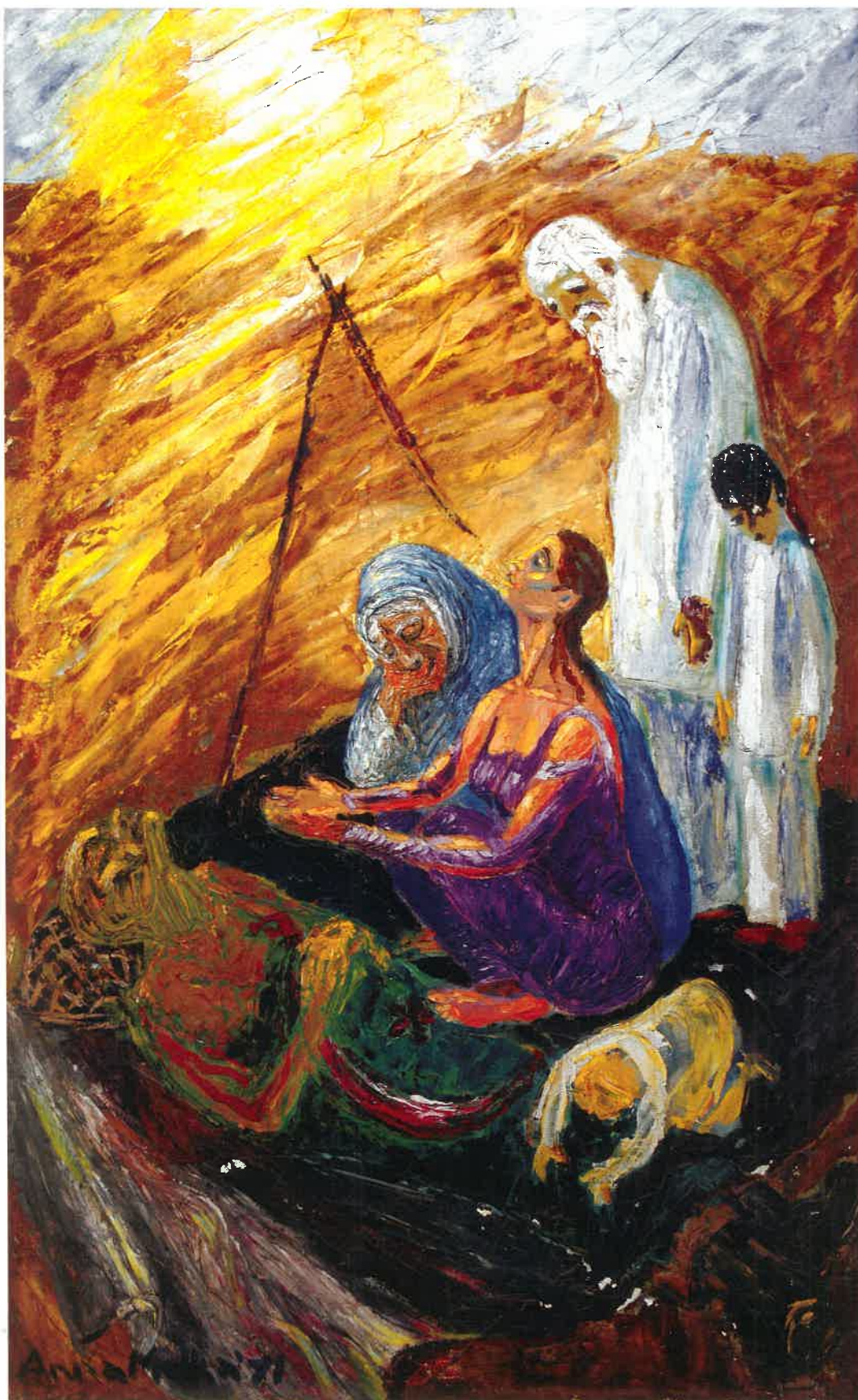
Murree

oil on paper 12" x 18"



Amultas

gauche on wassli 6" x 12"



Refugees

oil on canvas 30" x 36"





International War
oil on canvas 54" x 108"



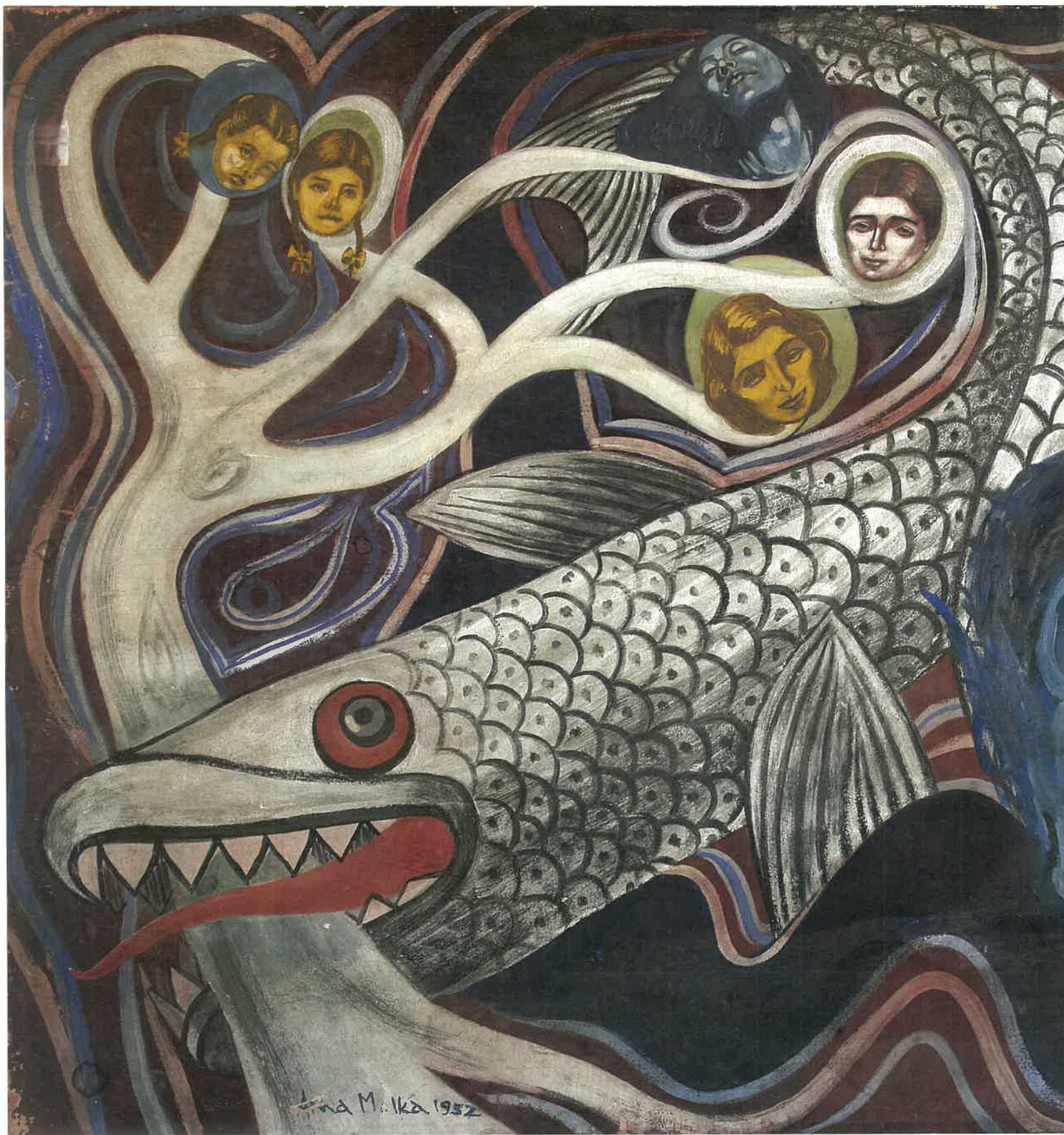
Refugees

oil on canvas 48" x 96"



Shaheed II

oil on canvas 30" x 48"





Final parting 1952
oil on paper 24" x 30"



Wagha Border

oil on canvas 36" x 60"



The Jawan

oil on canvas 36" x 60"



Final parting 1952

oil on paper 24" x 30"

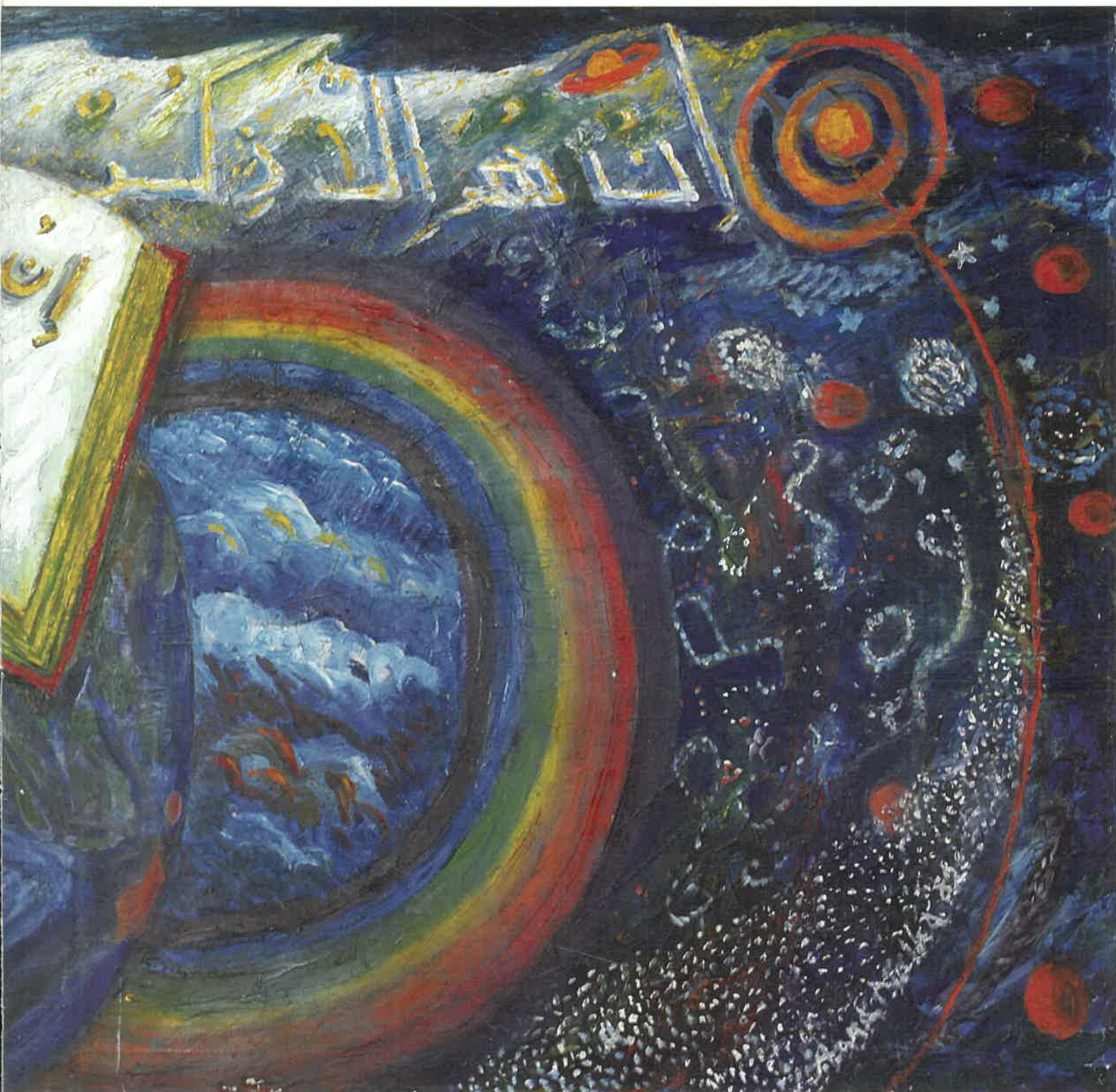


Final parting 1952

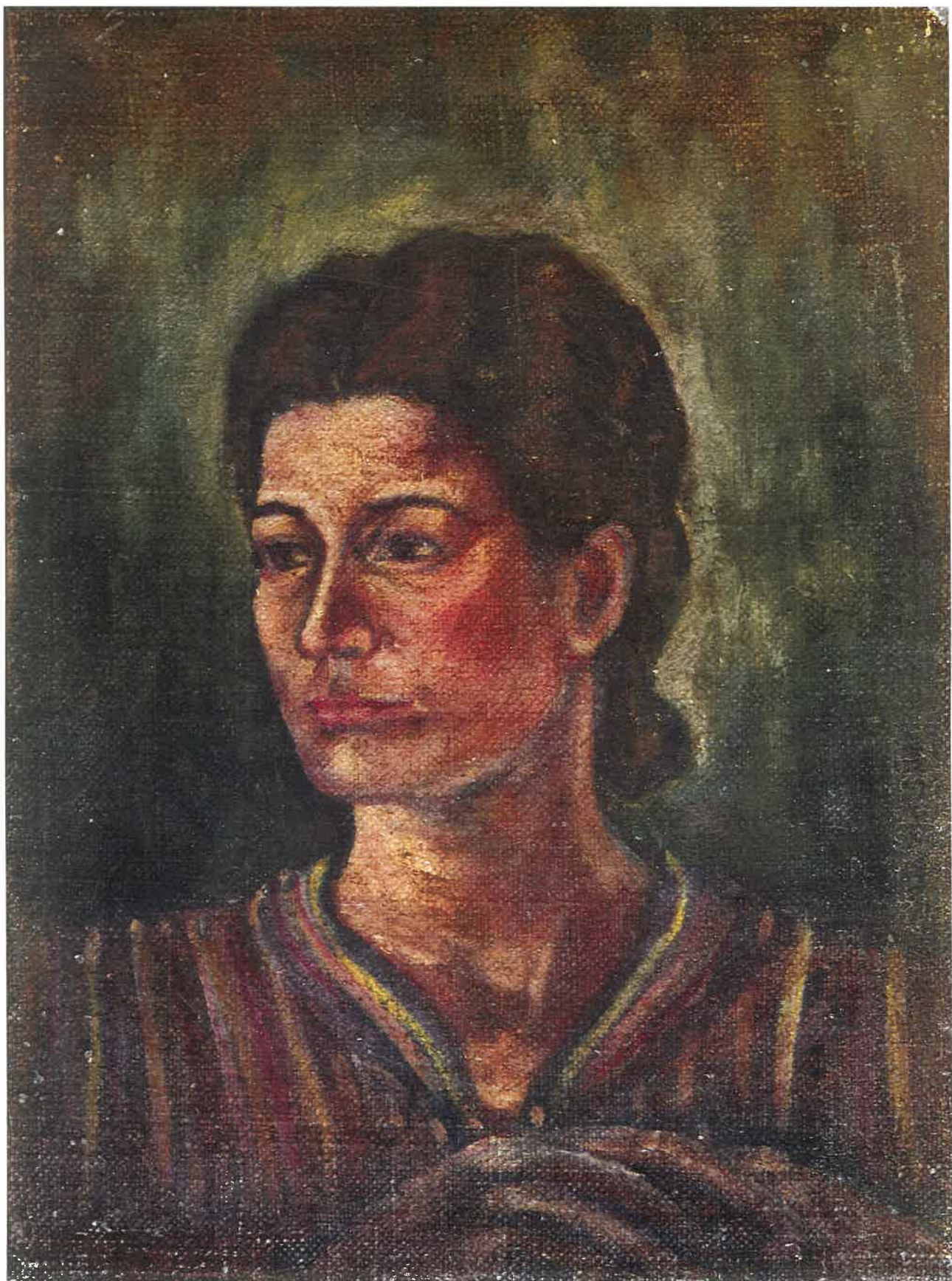
oil on paper 24" x 30"



Verily this is no less Than a Message to (all) the Worlds; Quran (LXXX1.27)

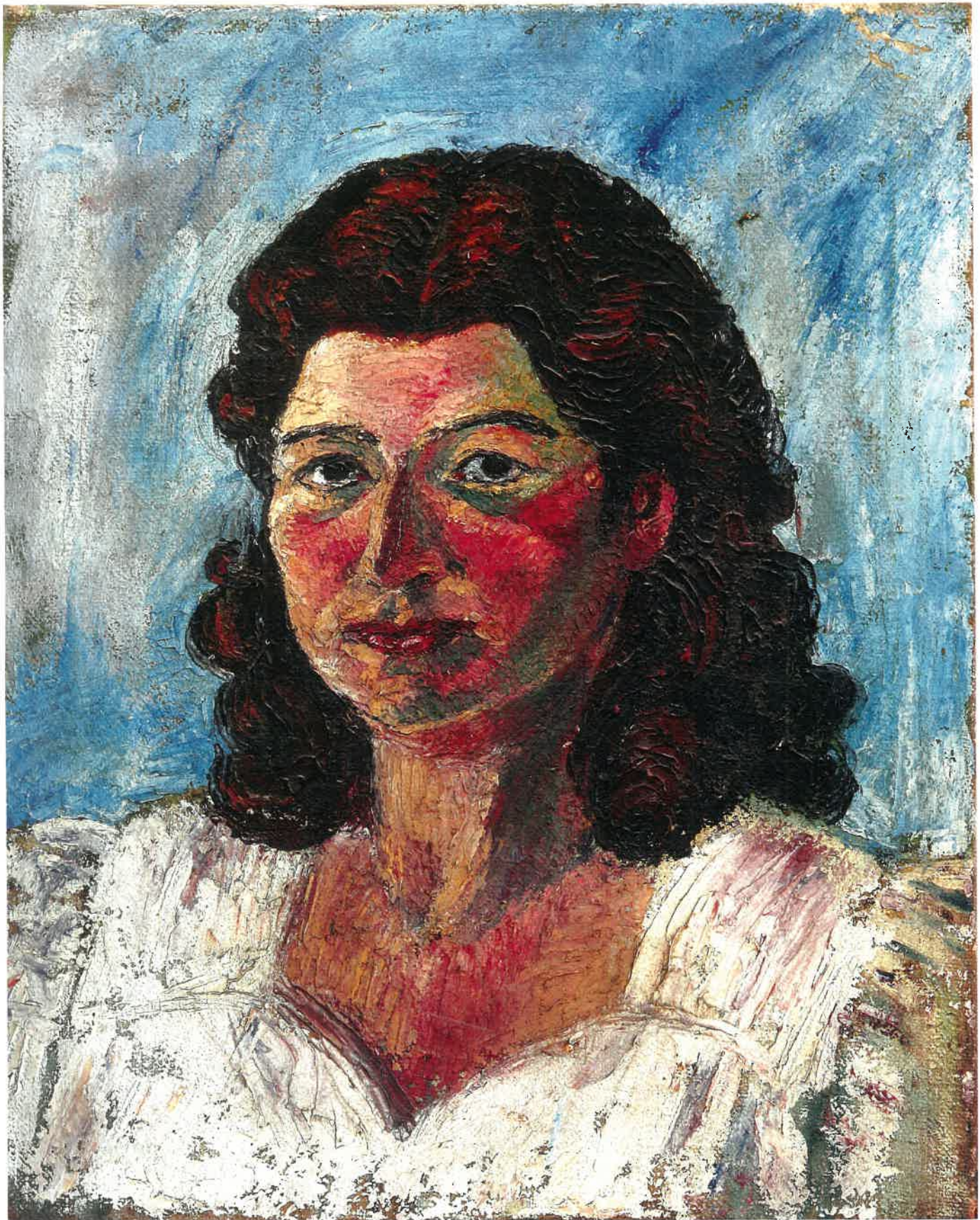


Oil on canvas 48' x 96''



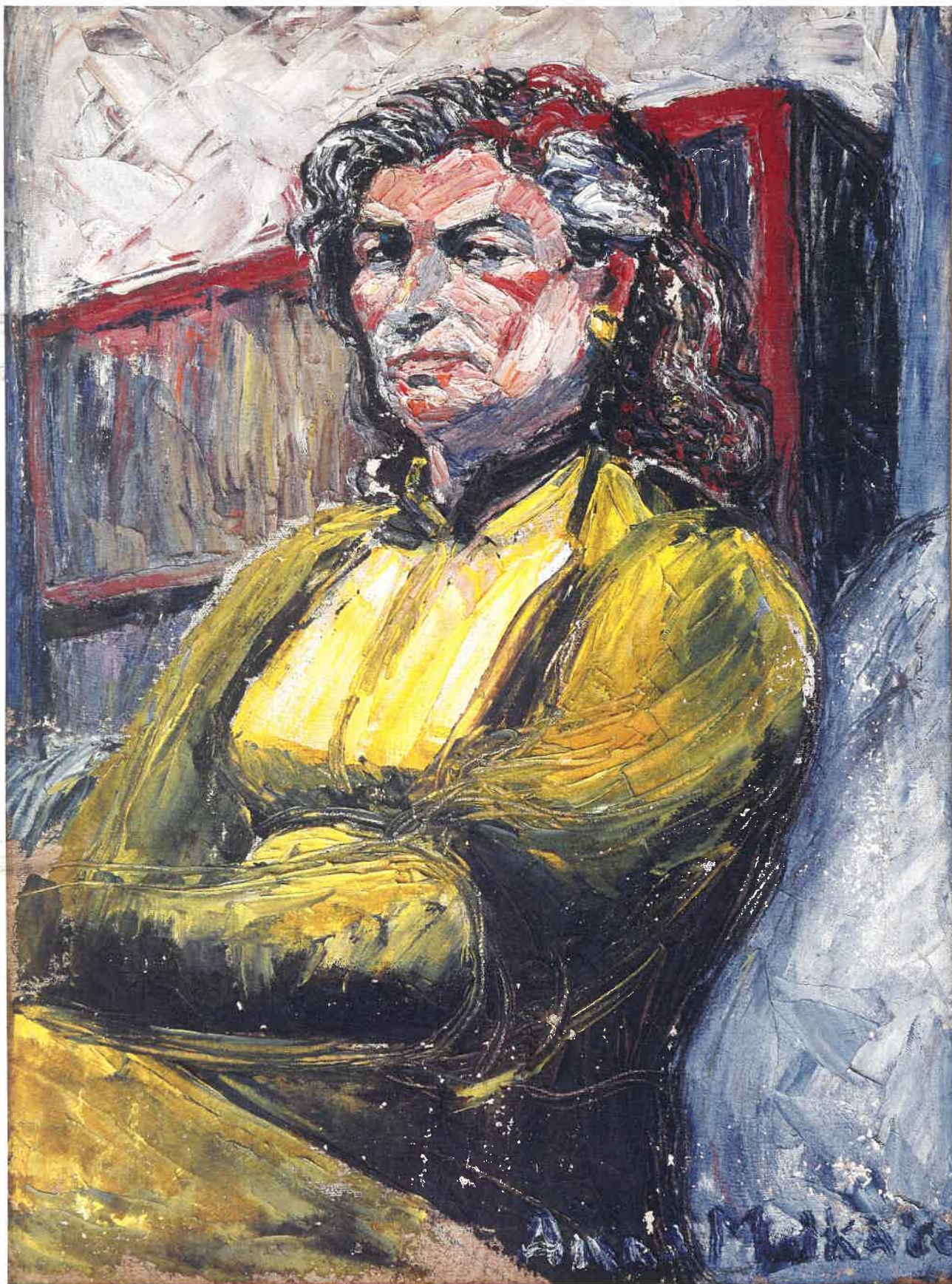
Self Portrait 1

oil on canvas 18" x 24"



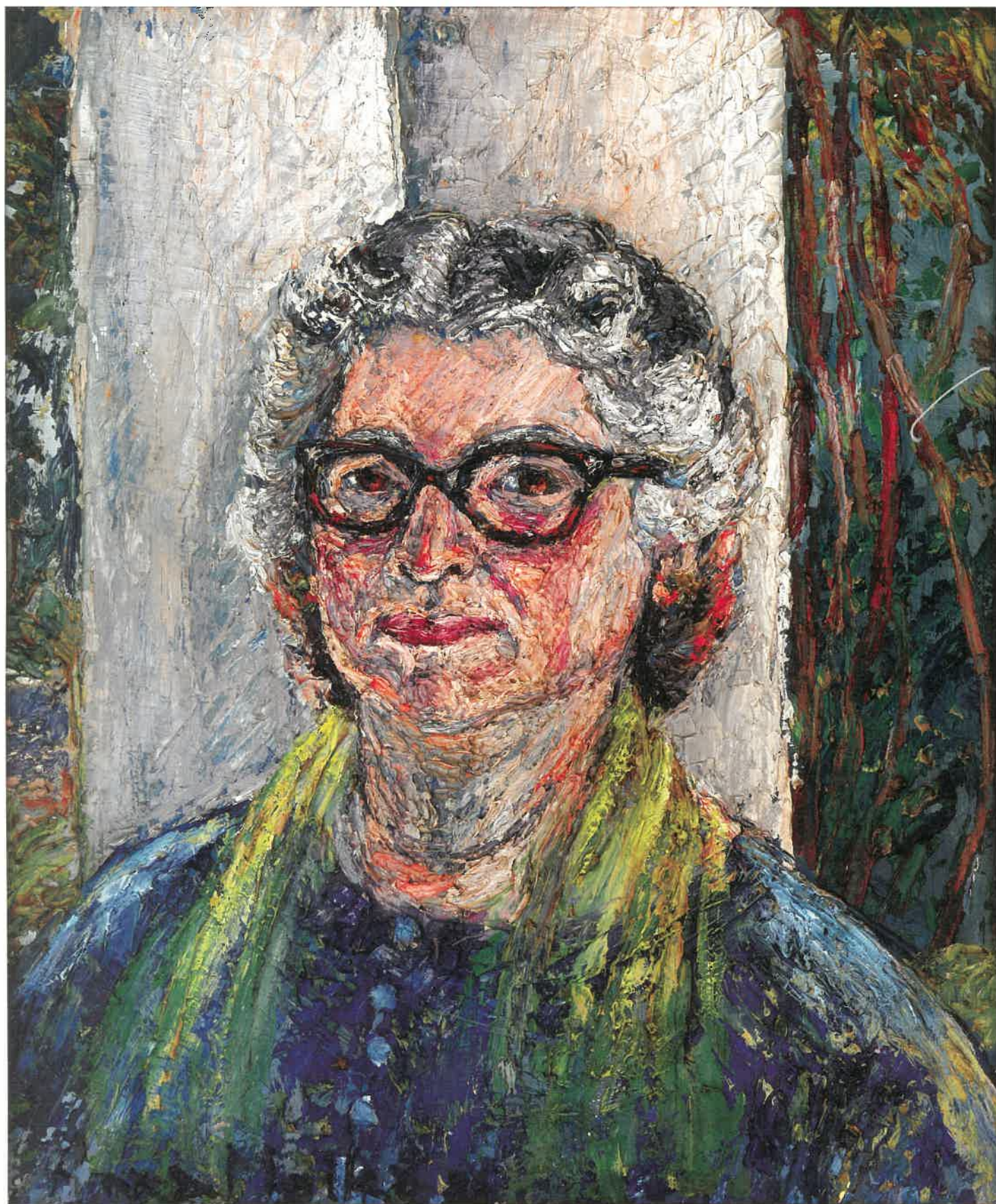
Self Portrait (2)

oil on canvas 18" x 12"



Self Portrait (3)

oil on canvas 18" x 36"



Self Portrait (4)

oil on canvas 18" x 24"



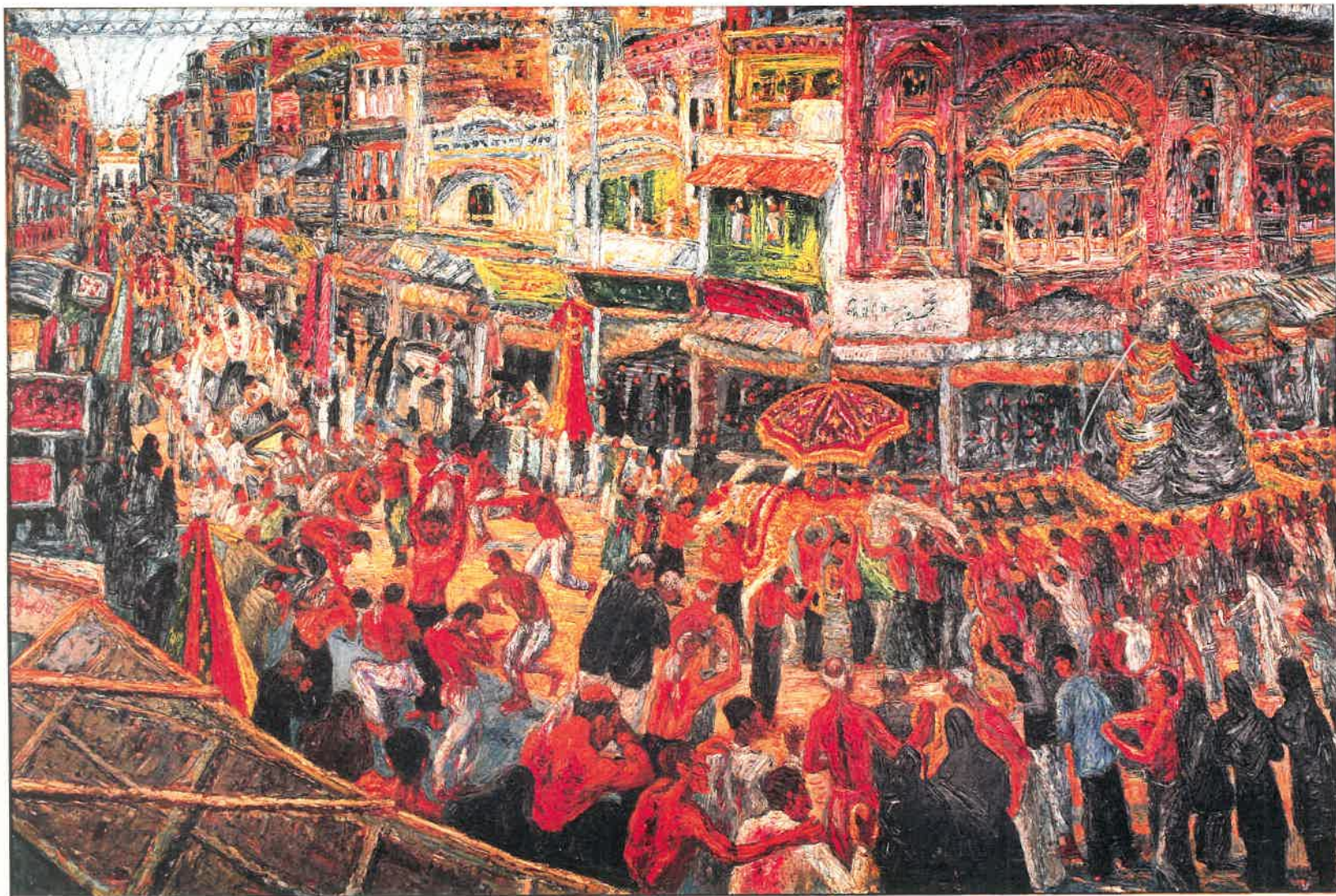
*Anna Molka's favourite painting.
Collection Lahore Museum: The Kaaba*

oil on hardboard 24" x 36"



Masjid Nabvi

oil on canvas 24" x 36"



'Tazia' 10th Muharram (at Rang Mahal, Lahore)

oil on hardboard 24" x 48"



Anna Molka Ahmed with Ghulam Mustafa in Shalimar Garden, 1985
Painting by Anna Molka Ahmed.

gouache on wassli 6" x 12"



Modelled in clay and cast in plaster: Zarah



Modelled in clay and cast in plaster: Nuzat



*The Blind Man (Life Size)
Sculpture in Plaster (Colour Bronze)*



Mother & Child



Mian Afzal Hussain



Portrait of Tahira



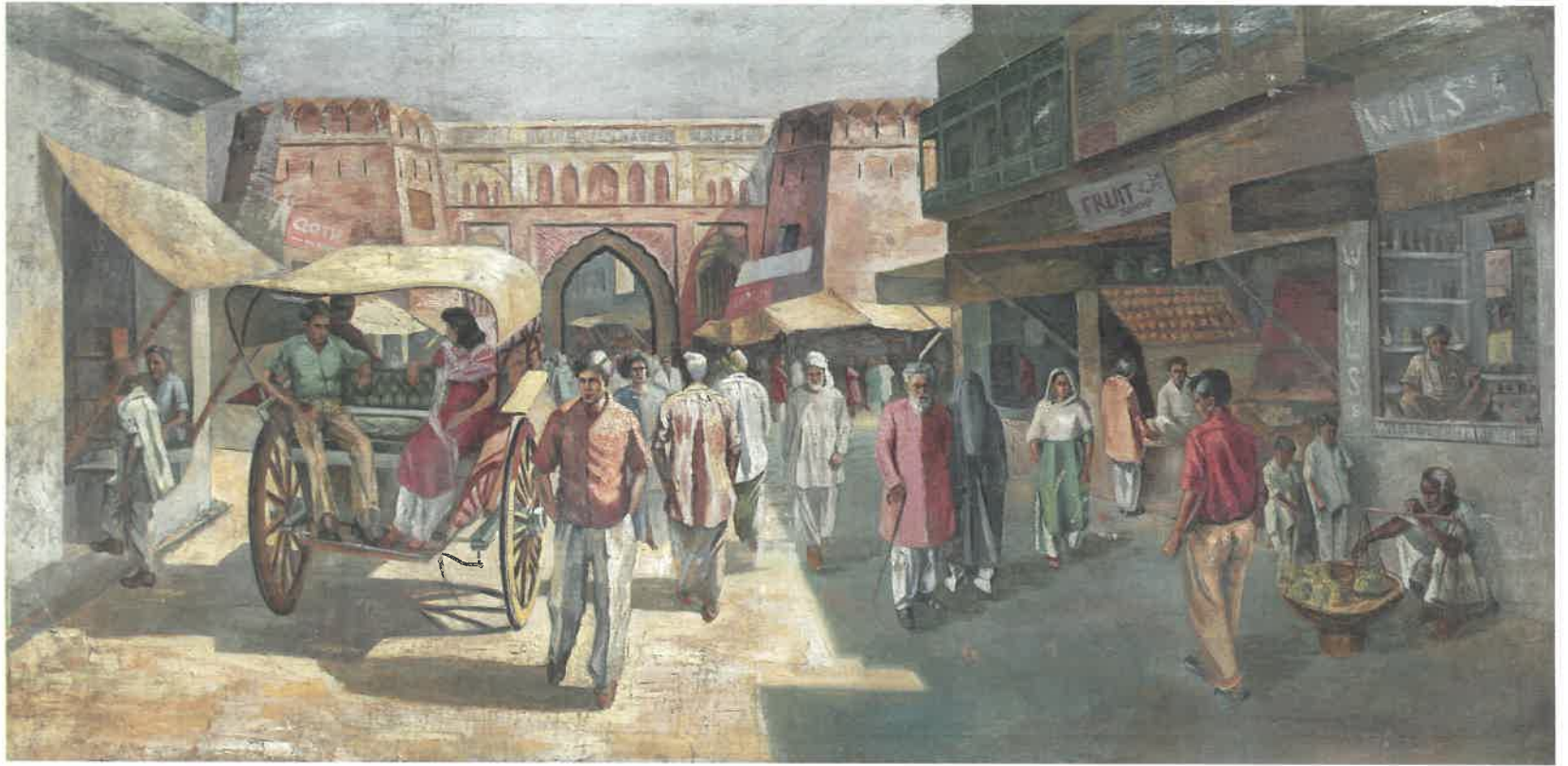
Women with peacocks



The Mermaid



Self portrait



Anna Molka Ahmad
painted by Aslam Minhas

oil on canvas 4" x 8"

Art review

Reinstating Anna Molka

The ongoing exhibition of Anna Molka's work is a proof of her imaginative themes, innovative schemes and surfaces that are retinal delights.

By Quddus Mirza

(June 2004)

The choice of venue for Anna Molka's retrospective at Shakir Ali Museum, named after her contemporary and competitor, is thought provoking. They shared a lot in common: both were associated with institutions on The Mall in Lahore, former at the National College of Arts (NCA) and the latter at the Punjab University.

Yet both embodied different aspects in our art, they belonged to two distinct aesthetic attitudes – classicism and romanticism. Actually these two approaches have been practiced throughout history but the divide between the two was sharper in the age of Renaissance: With the Florentine artists (like Leonardo and Michelangelo) at one side and the Venetian painters (led by Titian) on the other.

The separation of classicist and romanticist in art is based on the way formal elements are employed in an artwork. The classicists prefer line that describes the form and denotes a cerebral pursuit, while the romanticists shape the image through colour, which creates an atmosphere as well as invokes emotions. In our part of the world, Shakir represents classicism and Anna Molka romanticist.

Believing Anna Molka to be a romanticist is justified because of the aesthetic qualities in the

works displayed in the current exhibition – 'A retrospective'. All the pieces have been borrowed from one collector – her younger daughter.

These works, majority of which comprise oil paintings, indicate her specific technique of picture-making. Instead of the usual method – drawing and then filling in colours – her images are built on layers of paint applied with brush and knife. Even in the large works with complex imagery all figures and details in backgrounds are 'painted' in the real sense of the word. This trait of depicting both life around her and her imagination – not in the constraints of lines but through the interplay of multiple patches of paint – distinguished her from several Pakistani painters who enjoy constructing the image with the help of lines.

On the other hand it links her to English painters who concentrate on colour so much that often their fascination with the material takes over and the contours of reality are smoothed for the sake of a rich texture of thickly applied paint (for example in the heavy, almost low relief sculpture like canvases by Leon Kossoff and Frank Auerbach).

The surfaces of Ahmed are quite heavily laden with paint. These are scenes from her surroundings, portraits, cityscapes, still life and some mythological subjects. The most impressive work from the last category is the 'Dance of Death'. In this huge painting, some easily recognizable individuals are shown dancing with skeletons. It reminds the viewer of the Mexican festival 'The Day of the Dead'. The entire group of living as well as the dead are standing on skulls and on corpses lying at the bottom of the painting. In another work, titled 'International War', and of similar concerns, Anne Molka illustrated the eternal conflict. With the flags of various countries stretched on the ground and armies in the present day uniforms committing

brutal acts. The ancient warriors on the horseback cover the red sky. A few screaming faces (clearly related to the famous painting 'The Scream' by Edward Munch) of mothers and children confront the viewers.

Such works remind a viewer of a forgotten dimension of Anna Molka Ahmed. Her imaginative themes, innovative scheme of composing her visuals and then treating the whole surface as a purely retinal delight, reaffirm her status as an important visionary painter of this nation. The sophistication in dealing with the metaphysical subjects through a personal vocabulary reminds us that she was not necessarily a realistic artist. Perhaps her fame as a realistic painter is based on her teaching practices. She introduced and always pursued a conventional academic programme at the University of Punjab (ironically, the same university does not recognize the postgraduates degree from her alma metre, the Royal College of Art, as an equal to the MA degree granted by the Department of Fine Arts of the Punjab University that she established in June 1940).

The dichotomy of her ideas as an art teacher and her practice as a painter is evident in her other works too. A number of these are the sections of buildings, portions of gardens, city squares with pedestrians and vehicles, and activities such as constructing a house etc. Interestingly most of these are urban settings but the special way of handling the paint and rendering the details

resemble pastoral views. The abundance of bright tones and vivid colours suggest a calm and pleasant atmosphere rather than the dusty, busy and crowded locality.

The transformation of reality in the cityscape is visible in her portraits and figures as well. Many of these, either oils or pastels, portray local people and characters – such as 'Faces from Swat', women in shuttlecock burkas, men in turbans, and a boy playing with a ring. Naturally all these, like the rituals of Muharram, must have fascinated the painter who migrated from Great Britain since she enjoyed depicting vernacular scenes. The element that saves her work from falling into an anthropological slot is her act of painting these in an expressive manner. The portraits, which signify the models from this land, also reveal the inner self of the painter. Similarly in majority of her cityscapes, the figures in markets and vehicles on the roads are rendered in a personal, naïve and caricature-like style.

This exhibition that is scheduled to continue until June 28, 2004 not only brings out works which were not seen before but also reinstates the status of Anna Molka Ahmed as a painter of great imagination and vision. It puts forth her position vis-à-vis a realistic artist, and at the same time challenges her reputation – of a realistic artist. Her show can be the first in a series of many exhibitions which may help in remembering, relocating and re-evaluating the painters of past.

Articles by Anna Molka Ahmed

Child Art

by
Anna Molka Ahmed

A good Society is not built of just bricks and mortar and equal wages for all; nor does Health mean only bodily well-being. It is true that all these things help towards the enjoyment of happiness but there are certain other requirements. Enjoyment is a creative process.

Modern Psychology has shown that the child cannot articulate its frustrations and longings till it can speak and express. It therefore depends on its parents for care and goodwill but the parents own ill-will and unhappiness can handicap the infant from the very beginning. This is the human tragic-comedy described by the psychologists. So to bring about the Brave New World we must all work together. Not only is the school stage important for the child but the pre-school stage. Not only is the training of the school teacher important for the child but the understanding of the parents.

Play is a natural expression of childhood. Children play with each other and play at make-believe and play at being grown up. Such spontaneous activities are instincts. Play in its purest form means distinct from work or games, no sense of completing a task or any sense of rivalry. The young child running about shouting, laughing, jumping and dancing is like the young kitten hiding, bouncing and leaping. These impulses and activities are unlearned. They are instincts.

German authority Grees worked out a theory that

play is nature's method for preparing her creatures how to use their capacities for the future. Crouching and leaping kittens learn to catch mice, wrestling puppies practice methods of overpowering their rivals, a girl nursing a doll practices motherhood. McDougall criticized Grees. He denied that the impulse to play was an instinct in its own right. He says that instinct is a specific impulse to a specific activity accompanied by a specific emotion. For example a situation of rivalry and frustration and opposition to some strong need brings about the instinct of combat generally accompanied by anger. Again the instinct to escape is aroused by danger and accompanied by the emotion of fear and the activity is flight.

But play has no goal and no such definite pattern and is not a response to any particular external situation. Although it has a great number of activities, it is pursued for its own sake and its emotion if any is one of enjoyment. Therefore McDougall concludes it is not an instinct "per se." He goes further and explains that the energy that sustains activity is non-utilitarian and finds it in unused energy such as the prowling of a caged beast or the fidgeting of a school-boy chained to his desk or the sailor pacing the decks of his ship or the frisking horse. No purpose, no emotion – just surplus energy to be spent.

Never-the-less, with human child, the situation is more complex. Whatever he does he also repeats and in repeating he LEARNS. This LEARNING

is the BY-PRODUCT OF PLAY. In this conclusion later writers such as Jackson and Todd, diverge from Grees but go further than McDougall. Even older children delight in play and although it is not pure meter running, jumping, climbing etc and may be expressions of a psychological need to assert themselves dominate or attract attention, never-the less it is PLAY.

Not long ago the child knew no respect from his elders. If he was born in a wealthy family he was forced at an early age to pore over his books till his brain became crammed with knowledge no matter how little his hands could do. If he came of a poor family his plight was worse for he had to spend hours as an apprentice learning a trade or in a mill or factory. Play was looked upon with disapproval and the child's desire for it was to be conquered before he could become a useful citizen. A knowledge of the working of human mind and Child Study is bridging the gap between the younger and the older generation. We are all potential parents and teachers and therefore this study should begin before we contemplate the serious responsibility of having children or teaching them. The child is "Father of the Man." No longer is it a case of being "duty bound" or "owing a duty to one's parents," this feeling has been supplanted by a feeling of close comradeship between parent and child. Learning and adjusting are extremely tense processes in childhood and we lighten these burdens through our understanding and love.

To the child there is no clearly defined boundary between dream and reality or between play and everyday life. Just as the artist moulds his clay to create a work of art so the child through instinctive play kneads his entire social environment into a shape that is acceptable to him and the social structure. Just as the emotions of the artist are expressed in his product so the emotions of the child are transferred to his make-believe his colours and his toys. Without undue

discipline and therefore without frustrations, the creative influence can manifest itself.

The Child is the instinctive artist. Malreaux has written....."....while the child often has a gift for art, he is not an artist. His gift controls him, not he, his gift." The artist " treasures up his acquisitions."--that is he remembers and uses knowledge gleaned from his own and other artist's observations and experiences, whereas the child would never think of doing this. The artists are not recording actual facts or events, they are not copying nature and therefore the work of art is called a work of the Imagination. The artist is expressing and communicating his experiences so that the spectator can live through the experience also. This act is described by the special term of "Empathy." The man who creates a tune and the man who listens to the tune are playing with their emotions. Similarly if a little boy has been frightened by a barking dog or galloping buffalo in the bazaar and runs terrified to his parents for protection, his emotion of fear is real; but when at a later date he describes his experiences to some other relatives or friends and elaborates the story by saying that the terrifying monster was as large as an elephant, roared like a lion and had staring eyes as large as plates, then he has used his imagination and created a work of art.

All art is in origin a form of play. The term "Creative Arts" includes Visual Arts, Crafts, Music Writing, Dance and Drama. The goal is self realization. It is not to produce masterpieces that we practice these arts but to enjoy creative activities, obtain experience and so learn to appreciate the works of others. We play tennis and golf, not to become champions, we read poetry and literature not to become poets or writers, we listen to music not to become musicians, but to gain pleasure actively through experience and improve our understanding and appreciation. While enriching our own individual

development through art education, we are also promoting international understanding, for art is a universal language.

In contemporary Art Education it is universally agreed that the children or students should be controlling participants in all art activities. They should select the subject matter, materials and techniques so that their creativeness is allowed freedom of expression. In the old days of teaching art, any deviation from the set model was frowned upon but unless freedom is given, the result is not art and unless this freedom is given, the pupils cannot profit from an art programme. There are some people who feel that the child should be left absolutely and completely free and so in some experimental schools for children very little motivation is used and very little guidance given. But such work is often lacking in many qualities and invariably below the standard expected. Children require GUIDANCE as well as freedom if they are to produce successful art forms. Teachers must be ready to offer guidance whenever the need is apparent. There is need of discussion and build up, especially for those in the class with less creative urge. The art room or "studio" as we should call it, should be pleasant and the atmosphere friendly and sympathetic. Much depends upon the individual initiative of the teacher. Accomplished teachers vary and change their ideas and methods, for change stimulates. There should be no deadening conformity of method in art education. Edwin Ziegfield has recently said, "It is my belief that the methods used by good teachers have characteristics in common with the styles of accomplished artists, namely, that both styles and methods are personal statements as well as being soundly structured and coherent." There need be only one art teacher for all types of arts and crafts work for the young children. This is because their approach to all art activities is empirical. So long as they have materials and are encouraged to find their own solutions to problems and can

get guidance and even aid when they need it, they will experiment with interest and learn to observe with care. If every teacher could learn one or other craft while they are in training, the art teacher would have valuable assistance.

The teacher must never draw or paint for the child or he becomes inhibited and unable to work. There should be no drawing on the blackboard or photographs. Children paint pictures that "feel" like the thing they paint. Any old camera can take pictures of things as they look. "What we have to say always matters more than how we say it." "Skill we must remember is the humble servant of ideas." Children eliminate all non-essentials when they express their impressions. Understanding parents and teachers recognize this primitive language of signs and symbols and show sympathy with their aspirations. Children paint what they know and their own experiences. Subject matter in creative art does not change during the various age levels for it is determined by "man and environments." It is not "man and environments" that change but as Lowenfield puts it, "what changes is our subjective relationship with man and environments". He takes the example of "man". "Man" to a 5 year old child means the self, the ego which has a head for thinking and eating and two legs for running. This symbol is a head-feet representation. For the 10 year old a "man" still means mainly a projection of the self but because a ten year old is aware of the variety of man's actions and movements and parts of the body, he represents what he knows. The 16 year old is more conscious of man as part of his environment and so size and proportion is presented in comparison with his surroundings. A tree changes in the same way. The 5 year old knows the tree as a trunk-something is on top. For the 10 year old the tree is a "trunk with branches to climb on" and for the 16 year old a tree is a part of the environment and he knows the details. The same tree, the same subject matter, changed because

the subjective relationship of the children to the tree changed. All over the world younger children express themselves in symbolic form which is regardless of the country in which they live. Older children sometimes show national characteristics. Some express placid agricultural scenes and some tragic expressions such as children pictures from the war areas.

Younger children prefer to work individually but later on it is good for them to work in a group. Natural groups are best. By "natural" groups I mean friends working together. Group work helps the shy to get confidence, and the team spirit and learning to share are good experiences.

Between the ages of 7 to 11, children continue Expressional Painting, modeling and pattern making and should be taught traditional crafts such as weaving, pottery and basketry, and how to make simple dwellings and clay figurines and how to fire them. Projects for the geography History classes can also be carried on. Writing patterns and picture making should go on side by side. Handwriting is a primary form of art dating back to hieroglyphics and picture writing and rhythmic patterns made from letters with large brushes or chalk can give children freedom of movement and manipulation. Children's paintings should be big for they naturally work big. But when they are given small pieces of paper then their style becomes cramped and afterwards it becomes very difficult to make them draw large and fill the paper.

There should be no attempt to hasten the child's grasp of reality for it will destroy his confidence if he is pushed. As his powers of observation develop he becomes conscious of space within the picture and a feeling for perspective and a sense of proportion and colour value grows naturally. When he reaches 11 years the child should be able to record his impressions from memory and observation. Some will have

developed powers of realism and others express themselves less realistically but both types should be rich in colour and imagination. Painting from nature does not come naturally till the adolescent stage. It is the adolescent with his newly acquired 'adult perception' that needs technical accomplishment and good craftsmanship; good colour sense and artistic judgement for his development towards maturity. There need be no crisis at the age of 13 but it is necessary that the Art Programme be changed to suit the enlarged mental horizon of the grown child. It is at this stage also that the art teacher should be Artist, Painting flowers and attractive still-life groups and outdoor landscape painting will teach them the appreciation of colour subtleties, relationships, and texture. Making things with weaving, embroidery, and appliqué and constructing and painting scenery, lighting and costumes for the school plays will lead them to the appreciation of good design and craftsmanship.

The study of plays, experience of acting, dancing, singing and music necessitates the collaborate of other staff members in the school. Puppet plays, marionettes or glove puppets and the model theatre technique are very useful activities. Observations and discussions about dress arrangements and decoration of the schools, the upkeep of gardens, discussions about buildings and industries make children conscious of good and bad design and is a starting point for the more advanced and academic study of History of Art and Architecture that they may study after they leave school.

Very few students will become artists but every one has the right to take pleasure in visual beauty.

Anna Molka Ahmed A.R.C.A. (London)

Head of the Department of Fine Arts, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Appreciating a painting:

Anna Molka Ahmed

When discussing paintings, two points are most essential. One is to be able to appreciate forms and colours, and the other is to understand how people of other times and places saw their worlds. With each generation there are changes in vision and by comparing art works which are typical of each period, one can define the visual concepts governing each generation. Every work of art is a record of the artist's vision, in more exact terminology, his "plastic" vision.

Plastic Vision

Vision is something seen and felt arranged as a design in colour, line or mass. The field of aesthetics makes a study of its formal composition, movement and emotional talents; his unique personality. On the other hand, as he has certain environments, climatic conditions, national traits, political and economic circumstances, religious beliefs and traditions, his work is representative of the culture and civilization of his time. This is not a conscious effort. The artist selects from the real work and then projects his own understanding through them. The genuine work of art is a personal experience as well as a collective truth.

Progress

We must also consider that there is no such thing as "progress" or improvement in the arts. Aeroplane and car designs can improve, the

sanitary conditions of a town can improve, the treatment for a disease can improve..... but not Art. How can we say that the Art of Today is superior to the art of any other century? Is there a standard by which we can measure whether a style is better or worse? There is no single criterion and therefore "styles can be compared, not graded".

Originality

A young artist usually follows an artist or art style of the preceding generation. It is quite natural to conform to the taste of the day. This is as true of the young painters of today who are influenced by their elders. Matisse, Picasso and Braque, as it was of young times academies or governments, all expecting different content in the paintings they require. The social structure determines the sponsoring group who in their turn encourage specific content and imagery which in turn inspires an appropriate form of presentation which becomes elements of style.

Spiritual

The fourth important factor is Spiritual Movement.

Movement

New imagery is always needed when a new philosophical or intellectual outlook comes about. "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the

water under the earth", says the Commandments. So the Jews broke their sculptured idols and developed a decorative non-figurative art. As there was no figure art to take from the Jews, the new Christians represented Christ in Graeco-Roman tradition. The third people with an inspired Book, the Muslims adopted non-figurative art. The Buddhist artist-monks painted and sculptured the life story of their Lord Buddha and Rajput painters illustrated their mythological stories and so on.

Materials

The fifth factor did not influence the content of the painting so much as it influenced the style. Materials such as portable water colours, transportable canvases and ready-made oil paints in tubes made out-of-door Landscape a most popular subject matter. No doubt the technique of oil painting made possible nuances and textures and transitions in tonal values that were not possible with the media of fresco and egg tempera and therefore gave much inspiration to the artist.

Content

Content is the "What" of the picture. Most periods of art history were "content conscious". So long as content does not dull visual sensitivity or monopolise the whole attention, the approach and enjoyment is still artistic.

The Human Body

Throughout the centuries artists have been inspired by different motives to portray the human body in a variety of ways. At first it was the magical intention of the prehistoric hunter to be successful and procure his food or for the creation of effigies for witchcraft, or for the sacred art when narrating some scenes and actions of the early civilizations. For recording events there was no conscious endeavour to create something beautiful. Again in the Spiritual Intent, the body was looked upon only as an outer garment of

the soul so as to give the spiritual message. At first the innocent nudity of Adam and Eve were treated as purely narrative but later from the beginning of the 14th century, the idea was to glorify the human body in the same way as in classical antiquity. The artist strove for naturalistic description, objective truth and beauty of the human body, and so they developed anatomy, perspective, modeling with lights, shadows and colours. By later Renaissance times the dramatic events of the Temptation, Fall and Expulsion from Paradise were used as themes merely for the artist's intent to depict the nude body in all its beauty. After the 17th century Adam and Eve as a subject declined and instead a fashion arose to paint the nude posed as a Greek or Roman goddess or else the sensuous figures of Bathsheba, Susannah and Solome replaced Adam and Eve. Gradually nudes were no longer Eve or Venus, Adam or Adonis, artists just painted nudes. At first the physical beauty of the nude stimulates but gradually in the modern trend the psychology of the model interests. Giorgione's "Sleeping Venus", Titian and Rembrandt's "Danai", Velasquez's "Venus and Cupid", Goya's "Maja Desnuda", Ingres "La Grande Odalisque", and Manet's "Olympia" are worthy of study.

The Three Graces

Another popular theme was "The Three Graces", the three semi-divine daughters of Zeus posed in an arrested dance movement. The Pompeian mural figures are almost static compared with the later more lively poses. Raphael, Botticelli, Vasari, Rubens and modern Picasso have all painted this theme. "The Judgement of Paris" a dramatic story, sort to individualise the three goddesses instead of depicting one body in three poses as in the Three Graces. Cranach the Elder, Rubens, Boucher, and Renoir all strove to express their personal vision. In composition it is the relationship of the figures that decides the quality rather than the details in the picture.

Religious Themes

"Christ at Emmaus" appearing the third day after the Resurrection and dining with two of his disciples at an inn, presents a difficult problem, a metaphysical experience to be depicted visually.

Many artists have painted this theme but Titian's and Rembrandt's are, by their very simplicity, the most effective. "The Last Supper" is a theme that employs light as a dramatizing agent either emanating from Christ or used realistically. Giotto, Fra Angelico, Leonardo da Vinci, Tintoretto, Rubens and modern expressionist Emil Nolde are some of the famous artists who have painted this theme. "The Adoration of the Magi" is one of the oldest and most popular themes like the "Annunciation", "Nativity", "Last Supper" and "Crucifixion". The Three Kings are shown worshipping the Christ Child on the lap of the Virgin in the stable.

16th Century

During the 16th century when the powerful merchant group patronized art, Art became more secular and depicted new and unexpected or transitory themes in contrast to past tradition and standard. Historical incidents, contemporary life, types and individuals and amusing scenes, every picture had a fresh contact with the life of the times.

Bathers

"Bathers" has been a theme for the artists who wished to depict the human body with landscape. The people are not more individual than the natural background. Fragonard, Renoir, Cezanne, Seurat, and Gauguin, each of their versions are delightfully different and individual.

Cezanne created about a hundred variations of this theme. "The Picnic" is a figure composition with nature as a background. Giorgione's and Manet's paintings have both clothed and named figures while Watteau's "Breakfast in the Woods" and Goya's "The Picnic" are typical of the 18th century.

Card Players

"The Card Players" is another favourite motif. We must not be more interested in "how the game will go" or too amused if one of the players cheat because we must remember that a work of art depends upon the organization, design, light and masses and the colour scheme. There is a great variety of expression in Dutch van Leyden, Brouwer, and Pieter de Hooch and Italian Caravaggio and French Antoine le Nain of the 17th century and Paul Cezanne of the 19th century.

Feasts

Themes of "Feasts and Repasts" show social custom or are an excuse for the artists to arrange still-life on a table. They have no spiritual interest like the Last Supper. Veronese, the last of the great Renaissance masters delighted in painting banquets and grand feasts. "The Marriage at Cana", "Feast at the House of Simon", "Last Supper" and "Feast in the House of Levi" are biblical themes as a pretext for showing Epicureanism.

Portraits

The "Individual Portrait", the "Self Portrait", "Double and Group Portraits" are other popular pictorial themes. The model is the contemporary of the artist and therefore his face, pose and fashion of dress are characteristic of the age. Because portraits are commissioned, the artist is always bothered by non-artistic influences. The vanity and financial arrogance or the mood of the sitter and the layman's idea of expecting literal resemblance, whereas the artist concentrates on his sitter's character and personality as a whole or he emphasizes a certain trait that is very marked. In "Masaccio's", "Trinity" and Van Eyck's "Madonna" the donator of the picture had himself portrayed as a subordinate figure in the painting. Individual portraiture as we know it today began in the middle of the 15th century. There are so many

individual portraits by famous artists that it is not possible to mention them all. Leonardo's "Mona Lisa", Raphael, Titian, El Greco and Velasquez's portraits of Popes, the many portraits of Hans Holbein, Frans Hals, Van Dyck, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Boucher, David, Delacroix and Ingres need careful study. Self portraits are autobiographies, studies in self analysis. Durer, Holbein, Velasquez, Titian, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Rubens, Chardin, Goya, Van Gogh, Oskar Kokoschka and Chirico's portraits are well worth studying. Van Eyck's "Giovanni Arnolfini and his Wife", Ruben's portrait of himself with his first wife and Rembrandt's "Self Portrait with Saskia" are famous examples of the double portrait. Rembrandt's "Anatomy Lesson" and "Nightwatch" are fine examples of group portraiture. In spite of the fact that the Nightwatch burghers were dissatisfied, they obtained immortality because of his genius.

Landscapes

"The Artist in his Studio", "The Girl by the window", Landscape, Interiors and Still-Life are other favourite artistic themes. Landscape was at first a background, a secondary beauty. Later a changed sense of reality was present in the works of Constable, Turner and Corot and the work of the Barbizon School who painted ordinary, typical landscapes without idealization or sentimentality. The artist became increasingly concerned with "pure" painting. The Impressionists were interested in the changing conditions of light which they endeavoured to

depict by eliminating sharp outlines and with vibrant colour patches caught fleeting experiences. One need not ask the picture's meaning. Twentieth century Seurat, Cezanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh all advanced beyond this visual dead end, in their own way. Seurat's goal was a rationalized technique to make permanent the momentary impression. Cezanne organized natural forms into cones, spheres, cubes and cylinders, Van Gogh's expressive emotional exaggerations became his language. Gauguin made his pictures a flat plane.

The cubists painted mandolins, playing cards, newspapers, pipes, etc. which became by their very repetition selective content. Picasso and Braque translated things into geometric forms, taking objects apart and reassembling them. The camera inspired the Futurists to visualize motion pictorially. The Impressionist saw with his eyes, the Expressionist with his mind. The abstract non-objective school led by Kandinsky, Arp and Piet Mondrian rejected the organic world and painted pure design. We are asked to understand it as we understand music. Content was eliminated. Surrealism is the reaction. All objects had the "convincing" unreality of dreams, reveries and madness. It liberated the unconscious. Today the artists have begun to reinstate nature. It is as exciting as an adventure to study the History of Art and wonder what new trends will be created.

**Reproduced in Exhibition Catalogue 1957,
courtesy of Radio Pakistan.**

Why design is so important

Modern Design is the great achievement of our Age. Everyone shares this great achievement as part of their daily life. People's homes and the things they live with, things that people choose themselves and take pride and interest in, such as electrical fittings, furniture, upholstery and fabrics, carpets, vases, cooking utensils, crockery and cutlery, are among the diverse articles that we assemble to live with and that express ourselves.

The special creations of handicraft and the machine-made products have both contributed to make the modern home.

When we design to give form to objects used in everyday life, we have to relate design to many human activities. Design is affected by Engineering and Art in particular but also by politics, economics, philosophy and science. As it has the exceptional characteristic to be part of everything people do it therefore expresses the essential character of the age and the people.

When we create or procure well designed objects for our homes we do not obtain them for their historical value but because we find pleasure in living with beautiful things. The design suits our needs and its intrinsic value our tastes.

Art in its pure form expresses man's spirit...

Engineering is devoted to efficiency..... Together Expression (Art) and Function (Engineering), are merged intentionally to create a balanced whole. Just as Form and Efficiency are one in Nature, so Beauty and Function are intrinsic to Design.

The Designer is integrated into the work-a-day world of realities in contrast to the other-worldliness of the artist, but he broadens the material mind of the business man whose philosophy is business is an end in itself. Design improves the aesthetic value of our products and can become an instrument of national prosperity for our country. It coordinates practical economy with spiritual freedom.

The Bauhaus School from 1919 to 1933 was the focal point in the integration of design with machine age. Many designers of different nationalities worked there. They employed straight lines and the inventive use of materials with the utmost simplicity. Many of its former workers left Germany and now live in U.S.A.

Sometimes Modern Arts Design is known as "Machine Art". The precise geometric shapes influenced painters, sculptors and architects and even the hand craftsmen.

Undated Paper: Anna Molka Ahmed

How to appreciate Art

A far too common and current opinion is that Art is a luxury – a monopoly of the wealthy – a matter for museums or something of which to be conscious during one's leisure hours, being only an unessential matter divorced from one's daily activities. All this is far – far – from the truth !

What is this thing called Art ? It surrounds us and is everywhere in some form or other, having existed throughout every age of mankind. Being egoistic, "man rates the work of his own imagination higher than anything he finds in Nature." He prefers things that he fashions himself and his art mirrors him to himself and to his fellowmen and to those who come after him. It registers his degree of intelligence, his history, feelings, thoughts and emotions and his knowledge of science. There is hardly a phase of life where art has no connection. It helps the bricklayer lay his bricks and the gentleman to adjust his tie. He helps the mistress of the house to design her home and drape a dupatta on her head and shoulders.

We are all potential artists – it is a matter of degree. In this age of mass production, Art provides the only channel through which man (artist and layman) can cultivate his individuality. Art has degrees of purity and when it is in its purest form the noblest experiences are attained and it is called "Fine Art". Music and poetry are also arts but they are not expressed materially. They are created in the mind and conveyed with a symbolic language but in Fine Art the whole conception is solid, be it painting, a piece of sculpture or a building. Art exists for most of us. For some it permeates all life. There are but

few who have not the capacity to understand or to create. Many have considerable ability although few become great artists.

Taking a broad view, everyone is an appreciator of some sort of art. Either the subject and ideas, mannerisms or technical excellence win approval. 'If the appreciator has his faculties and susceptibilities in tune, he should be able to feel all the emotions lay bare by the man who created them.' Whenever one stands before a work of art one has the inclination to probe into the mind and feelings of the originator. There are two publics; the larger public looks to the painter to provide a confirmation of its own world of bourgeois values and the smaller public which realizes that it is the great artist who looks beyond the present and will therefore give the most satisfaction.

The practicing artists explore the advanced world and welcome the force or urge which compels them to record their findings. They have faith that they will succeed in their search for this essence called Art. Whenever they find a motive, be it inspired by Nature or their own imagination their emotions besiege them and make or mar their work. They welcome and enjoy all experiences. The ugly and grotesque, vice and horror meet on the same high plane as the austere and chaste. Even when painting the most tragic motive the artist feels no real pain. There is no craving, fatigue, conflict, anxiety or disappointment.

All his emotions are intentional and ideal, like the emotions of play or recreation. These experiences and emotions often interfere with his ordinary existence and when this occurs he feels

he could live better without them. He captures something intrinsic which stays with him for ever and he feels that some precious part of himself has been laid at the feet of his ideal. It is to these high aims and fine experiences that we attribute the persistence of Art through all ages.

There is a great gulf between one age and another and each country has a marked identity which prevents its being mistaken for another. Tastes also are relative to periods and conditions in life. There is no dogmatic formula or authority to judge which among pictures is the greatest – for Art is broad enough to include many kinds of greatness. If you are sensitive to rhythm then you will like works of art that are strongly rhythmic. If you are sensitive to colour and certain harmonies and contrasts then you will prefer the works of those artists who use those colours harmonies and contrasts in their paintings. Similarly symmetry, grace and charm will attract. It does not matter whether we agree with each other concerning pictures, but it does matter very much whether we each know WHY we like certain pictures better than others and can trace our preferences to fundamental principles. Appreciation of Art involves an understanding of essential principles. Everything is seen as a form created by Nature or by man and recreated, not copied, by the artist through such art expressions as rhythm, balance in

proportion and relationship, variety yet unity and harmony. Ordinary everyday seeing is quite different from the way in which artists look at things. In nature there is so much which is chaotic and that can be omitted with advantage. When the artists see form they reform it and create something new which is more significant than the original. Sometimes these forms are realistic but at other times they are very far removed from realism.

The University has two main tasks in the field of Art Education. Firstly to cultivate a taste for Fine Arts and Crafts as leisure time pursuits so that public taste and appreciation is raised to a high level and secondly to provide training in painting and design for those taking up artistic careers. The purpose of our annual exhibitions is to arouse a healthy interest in art and a genuine desire to understand it. No book or professor can teach true art appreciation any more than a guide can climb a mountain for a traveler. We offer guidance, show the path and suggest an approach to the understanding of the arts and so help the students to see, feel and think for themselves.

Anna Molka Ahmed A. R.C. A. (London)

Head of the Department.

(Undated)

From a brochure ... 1955

Recently the scientific West has veered away from realism. Western artists have discovered a "certain something" in oriental art and also in primitive art that they would like to capture and imbibe so as to express in their own works. German Expressionists have been influenced by primitive art while Van Gogh and Gauguin and Whistler were influenced by Japanese Art. The decorative quality of Matisse's paintings are also of oriental derivation.

Oriental Art has as its essential quality simplification and symbolization but although it appears realistic yet when studied closely there is underlying design, traditional formulas and often abstraction. This can be noted in Hindu sculptured figures, Chinese Buddhist sculpture, Japanese and Chinese coloured woodcuts and Moghul and Rajput miniatures etc. All subject matter was recognizable — there was no — "non-representational art" as in the recent development of abstract art.

When Western realism infiltrated into India and other eastern countries, the technique of shading in line and tone to produce solid form and the effect of reality when drawing in perspective and the rendering of light and atmosphere, were enthusiastically appreciated by the oriental artists and the oriental public. The "Rumi" or European style was accepted as a Kalm by the Moghul rulers who urged their artists to incorporate all the western discoveries into their own techniques.

We have to admit that modern western civilization has been imported and imposed upon eastern countries and we have to accept the fact also that a false pride has made the eastern countries seek to imitate and copy western civilization and western habits so as to be thought advanced enough to take their place with the modern nations. Although social and material benefits have ensued and scientific and technical developments have taken place, there has been an extraordinary situation as far as culture, arts and crafts are concerned. Western visitors still admire the 'picturesqueness' of the orient. The colourful traditional costumes, ornamentations and arts and crafts are so attractive! Having overwhelmed the eastern civilizations and demolished their traditions — western connoisseurs advise nations who are busily endeavouring to keep pace with western fashions and ways of life to retain their own traditions. When the Greek civilization overwhelmed the Egyptian civilization, the Egyptians clung to their old traditions but could not ignore the new influences. Their works became mere copies of antique fashions. Later at the invasion of Christianity, the declining Egyptian tradition died. There was no longer a way of life that needed that type of Egyptian Art.

The "scientific and material" West has overpowered the "spiritual East" and so at present the oriental is neither absolutely rooted in his own tradition nor has he entirely adopted the

new ways of living and thinking. A most uncomfortable halfway house has been reached. Universally the significance of Art has been accepted as being the expression of the emotions and creative imagination. Such an expression, therefore, can only prosper where there is individual freedom and independence. As art must express the spirit of the age – it is not feasible to visualize this age being expressed in techniques and styles which are echoes of the past. No matter how much the ancient traditions are admired, to endeavour to return to them in the 20th century, would be superficial mannerism.

In Pakistan today, as in all oriental countries the greatest problem of education is how to adapt teaching to new conditions and yet retain elements worthy of our own tradition. Art education is suffering immensely. The education authorities have little interest in promoting art or education through art. This is the main reason why the type of education prevalent in Pakistani schools is creating misfits. One must be able to appreciate one's own culture as well as others' culture and study them with understanding friendly minds

from different points of view. Gradually a blending and unity of form will arise which will express this period of change.

The works exhibited by our Panjabi artists every year at the University Department of Fine Arts, are links in the development of Art in our country.

These artists are making history. They are striving for a mode of expression to represent our age and our environments – Pakistan 1955! Artists invariably suffer from being misunderstood because like seers they see into the essence of our being and into the future. Many artists have had to leave their own country and paint in exile and have been claimed by their own country only when another country had discovered their genius and extolled them. Others die unknown through sickness and poverty and are suddenly proclaimed as genii and bring glory to their native land which ignored them and starved them to death.

A.M. A.
Lahore.
February 1955.

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The Sun blazes the colours through my window Anna Molka Ahmed
by Marjorie Husain



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