

ART OF SURVIVAL

While selecting the artists for the biennale I tried to select the artists from all the different areas of Pakistan, but the most important point I kept in my mind was to know the background of each artist, where are they coming from. Pakistan art is very resilient in general sense as it has survived many local and international political agendas. Pakistani art has witnessed ups and downs with political changes, wars, and the liberal upheavals. All these sociopolitical happenings have affected the art scene, some of the artists changed and some of them stood their ground and voiced their concerns.

Economy is the other very important aspect which we should keep in mind while commenting on the art produced in Pakistan. The title of my curatorial note "ART OF SURVIVAL" came out as I was studying each artist; I have been following the work of most of artists and have witnessed hard work and consistent efforts of each artist to reach to the top or to be noticed. I could say that main reason behind each artist was to earn their livelihood along with reorganization. Most of the artists are coming from lower middle to middle class backgrounds.

The selected artists are mainly fall in two categories accomplished and upcoming, but the quality of work in both cases shows quality reflecting the continuous efforts. I have witnessed the senior or accomplished artist playing their role as mentors and lots of handholding for young artists, to lift them out of oblivion by bringing them to limelight.

While watching this show one should keep in mind that as individual mind reflects socio-political situation of the country. Each artist bringing forth their quest to reflect on the sobriety in his or her own way. As audience you will be amazed with each individual approach; finding the meaning of life, the spiritual connection, changing society, their roles as family members, and trying to understand the life as global citizens, beyond the restrains of social and geographic boundaries, so we see a wide range of styles yet can be identified as "Pakistani Art".

Following are the short details of each artist. I will begin with young upcoming artists and specially the female artists, because I feel that as artist, they must work very hard to paint along with coping with expected female position in family as dictated by the society to complete the house chores as well. On the other hand, male artists also struggle to perform their role as bread earner while coping with social taboos and sometime harsh reactions from the society as they voice their concerns to different issues. I have placed the younger lot first and then the senior artists, as reflection of our social value to give respect to seniors.

Zafar Iqbal – curator

1. AMMAMA MALIK

Born in 1992, Ammama Malik is oil painter who earned her distinction by majoring in painting at the esteemed National College of Arts, Rawalpindi in 2016. Building upon her foundation, she further honed her skills with a transformative experience at the Florence Academy of Arts in 2018, immersing herself in an intensive studio program.

Ammama's artistry is a manifestation of her unwavering devotion to the timeless act of painting itself, a pursuit that pays homage to the core essence of this revered craft. While her compositions and subjects are distinctly contemporary, she artfully places words and concepts on the periphery, allowing the rich strokes of her brush to command the spotlight. Her deliberate approach speaks volumes about her dedication to the traditional style that she embraces. Her creations are a harmonious blend of the present and the past, with a clear resonance of the Renaissance and Baroque masterpieces that have left an indelible mark on her artistic spirit. Each stroke exudes drama and emotion, meticulously executed with a level of precision that reflects her commitment to excellence. These works not only evoke a sense of nostalgia for the eras that have shaped her, but also assert their prominence amidst the sea of contemporary art, making them stand out as true testaments to her remarkable talent.

2. MARIAM ARSHAD

Mariam Arshad completed her Bachelor in Fine Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore 2019. She was selected for the Student Exchange Program at Sienna Art Institute, Italy 2018. In 2018, she completed a one-month internship in Engraving at Mint Pakistan and doing coin projects.

She is an aspiring Visual Artist from Lahore, Pakistan. Being the daughter of a micro-engraving artist, Arshad Iqbal Mughal; her life revolves around art. Her portfolio is vast, both in terms of subject and medium, but it predominantly consists of oil paintings. Her works have been featured in several group shows and solo such as Fasting EVE (2023); O Art Space Lahore, Over and Above (2022); O Art Space Lahore; Sahr-e-Sadequain (2021) Islamabad; Khat-o-Kitabat (2021); O Art Space Lahore and virtually presented with Koel Gallery, Karachi. Arjumand Painting Awards (2021); Alhamra Art Council, Lahore; Young Blood II (2021); Canvas Gallery, Karachi; The Golden Leaves of Indus (2020); Art Chowk Gallery, Karachi and Pakistan Art Forum (2020). As for her future aspirations, she aims to highlight, educate and portray a positive image of our culture and lifestyle "while being close to her roots and identity."

Mariam's artistic style is central to the aesthetics of culture. Her inspiration mainly comes from what she sees, feels, and experience in a world that is more connected than ever before. She use her observations to build visual narratives that combine depictions of everyday, intimate interactions with the symbolism of discrimination in how she silently pick and choose who is worthy of inclusion.

Her work is about touch and trust. She focuses on street side professions associated with grooming, self-care, and visual transformation. Exploration of this concept began with her as she studied the textures of skin, especially goosebumps, which are triggered as a result of physical and emotional stimuli. Her subjects/characters mainly include: male, female, young

street vendors and trans-genders. She takes special focus on shadows as a vital part of compositions that serve as a symbol of life's hardships and struggles faced by the subjects. Her work illustrates grooming as an essential act that connects human beings in society. The commission of strangers for grooming and bodily care demonstrates a high level of trust and intimacy.

3. SANA ARJUMAND

Sana Arjumand is a contemporary multidisciplinary visual artist with a focus on painting. She has shown extensively across the globe and in her home country, Pakistan. Born in Karachi in 1982, She currently works and resides at her studio in Lahore, Pakistan. She received a High Achiever Award from Cambridge University in Advanced Level Art and Sociology. In 2005, Sana graduated in painting from the prestigious National College of Arts, Lahore.

Sana has shown in museums across the world, including a solo show at the Columbia Museum of Art, Museo Diocesano in Milan, Italy, and Nike Art Museum, Korea. She has also shown at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and held solo shows in Aicon Gallery, New York, Mary Place Gallery, Sydney, and in major cities across Pakistan. She participated in the 2019 Karachi Biennale as well as group shows in London, New York, Hawaii, Seoul, Amman, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Mumbai. Her work has been represented several times at the Dubai Art Fair, Indian Art Fair, Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Art Basel Hong Kong, the Flux Festival, London and the University of Sunderland, U.K.. Her NFT show with TheUpsideSpace is her first foray into this emerging art space.

Further to this, her work has been mentioned in Blouin Artinfo as one of the "Top Ten Rising Stars In Pakistan and India". Other international publications that have reviewed her work include Time Magazine, the Christian Science Monitor, Art Now, Asia Art Pacific, the Huffington Post, Nat Brut, Indian Times, H.A.S magazine, Free Times and the Art Quarterly (Christie's publication), to name a few. Her work has also been discussed in several international blogs and forums. In 2009, Sana was a resident artist at the prestigious Art OMI residency in New York. Her work has been collected by Francis J. Greenburger Collection (New York), Devi Art Foundation (New Delhi), Pondsides Press (New York), Rangoonwala (Pakistan), DIL foundation (New York) and Luciano Benetton Collection (Italy), among others.

Her work features intricately layered paint with hypnotically drawn figures, portraits and birds, using a luminously radiant color palette that is now known to be uniquely hers. The work explores the subject of mysticism and spirituality in which the geometric pattern symbolizes light and the bird has become a metaphoric symbol of energetic beings, suggesting the coexistence of higher dimensions. Larger-than-life eyes draw us into layers of meaning relating to other realities.

Her work represents deeply the personal inner journey and offer a space for everyone to reflect on their own inner realm. The light realms and mystic beings she paints flow fluidly into multiple incarnations, offering many streams for people to grasp. If we forget the world for a minute, we may remember the higher reality we are all born to. In this way, the work is defiant of conformity.

4. SADAF NAEEM

Pakistan based visual artist Sadaf Naeem, works in painting, mix media and installation. She received her MFA degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA in 2022 and BFA degree in painting with honors from the National College of Arts Lahore, Pakistan in 2002. To mention few of Sadaf's exhibitions out of scores of them, she has presented solo exhibitions at GRRIC in 2021 at UH Mānoa, O Art Space (Lahore Pakistan) in 2019, Chawkandi art Gallery (Karachi, Pakistan) in 2017, Koel art gallery (Karachi, Pakistan) in 2015, Taseer art gallery (Lahore, Pakistan) in 2013 and Ejaz art Gallery (Lahore, Pakistan) in 2007. She has received the 2020 Award of Merit in the Memory of Ethel Portner in the group show Fiber Hawai'i 2020 at Gallery lolani, Hawai'i. She is recipient of the foundation scholarship at EWC for 2020-2021, Lipsher Memorial award at UH Mānoa for 2020 and 2021. Sadaf was included in the Karachi Biennale in 2019, and produced an installation at Alliance Francaise. She has received Nigaah Art award in 2017, Pakistan. She participated in group show 'Euphonic Palate' by Nitansh gallery, Mumbai, and Delhi, India, Colombo art Gallery Sri Lanka. Lantern of the east, the 16th Pyeongtaek International Art Festival, Korea. Auction organized by Citizen Foundation at Dubai, UAE, and Scarsdale, New York.

Sadaf presented a research paper in 2nd International Conference of social sciences "Contemporary World:Challenges and Transformation CWCT-2023. Sadaf is an active art educator. Currently she is part of visiting faculty for Masters in visual arts at National College of Arts, and College of Art and Design, Punjab University, Lahore Pakistan. She has taught at the professional colleges 'Pakistan Institute of Fashion & Design', and 'Kinnaird College for Women'. Another side of her work is community service as Director of Studio Rm and Studio Rm Residency, (Lahore, Pakistan) she has conducts Drawing and Painting workshops for children regularly.

Sadaf's work is a transformational process where she engages with domestic spaces and objects specifically related to women. She paints and explores women's silhouettes to observe women's agency in different cultures and societies mostly comparing the different roles of women in reference to social settings. She makes visible the inter connection of physical and metaphysical realms, while capturing the essence of natural world. Through her work, she evokes a sense of wonder and curiosity about surroundings and strives to capture the subtle interplay of colors in nature represented through textile pattern weaves various stitches. In her creative process, she melds experience, concept, and material in the form of narration by incorporating multiple painting materials and techniques. These materials and methods are historically suggestive of craft and fine art traditions. She believes the materials carry value and agency while applying them in the fabrication process.

5. YASEEN KHAN

Yaseen Khan hails from Hyderabad Sindh, completed his Bachelor of Fine Arts from National College of Arts Lahore in 2018, he is recipient of Best Art work Award. Alhamra Annual Exhibition of Arts for Young Artists, 2018, won first prize for "The Real And It's Double" Exhibition at Embassy of France in Islamabad, Pakistan, Best Art work Award, Alhamra Annual

Exhibition of Arts for Young Artists 2019 and Beyond the threshold of time, Top10 Best Art work Award, Alhamra Annual Exhibition of Arts for Young Artists Exhibitions 2021.

Participated in several exhibitions; Alhamra Art Council 12th Annual Exhibition of Young Artists, Lahore (2016-2018), The Real And It's Double, Exhibition of Embassy of France in Islamabad, Pakistan 2018, Alhamra Art Council 15th Annual Exhibition of Young Artists, Lahore 2019, Eclectic Mix, at Sanat Art Gallery, Karachi 2019, Traces, at O Art Space, Lahore 2019, The Skin We Live In, at Canvas Gallery, Karachi 2019, A site for sight, Collateral Lahore Biennial (LBF) 2020, and Empowering Pakistan at World Bank Islamabad 2020, O Art Space collaborates with KL City Art Gallery (Malaysia) and Art Voice Seven 2020.

He has many international and national shows to his credit i.e. Gallery (Indonesia) for an online show, TALK TO ME, Beyond the Threshold Of Time, Alhamra Art Council 17th Annual Exhibition of Young Artists Lahore, NIC, New in City, at O Art Space Lahore, Khat-o-Kitabat, connecting to Past-Present-Future, O Art Space and Koel Gallery 2021, Dar-Amad, at O Art Space Lahore, Patterns, at Canvas Gallery Karachi, Art for Humanity, online (COVID), at O Art Space, Gustavo's and New York in collaboration with Shaukat Khanam and Artsoch Gallery, PAKART Embassy of Pakistan, the Netherlands, Curated by HE, Ambassador of Pakistan, Suljuk Mustansar Tarar, The Hague,

His artwork is the outcome of experiences, travels, and relationships built over the years. Growing up in two provinces; Sindh and Khyber Pakhtun Khwah (KPK) and now living in Punjab, he has absorbed vast cultural landscapes and diversities which is reflected in his work. Yaseen from a very young age use to work as a mechanic at a workshop where he decorated trucks with chamak Patti (a medium used to decorate trucks in Pakistan). Through this medium he was able to study aesthetics and cultural nuances between various regions and styles, He learnt the skills from various ustads (masters) over the years, and converted the skill into a creative art practice, after learning from the best artists in Pakistan at the prestigious National College of Arts, Lahore. His abstract patterns, lines, colors and imagery of objects came out from adoration and respect for manual work as an artist, mechanic, and craftsman. His practice triggers questions regarding various art forms that exist around which helps him to use a very common and understandable language of expression to create art while being relevant and embedded in the traditions and history of Pakistan.

6. HAMZA QAZI

Hamza Qazi was born in Lahore in 1995. He completed his formal education in visual arts from the esteemed National College of Arts Lahore in 2021. Following his graduation his distinctive works have been prominently featured in renowned galleries such as O Art Space, Sanat Initiative, Koel Gallery, Khas Contempo- rary, Full Circle, PNCA, and PAF. Qazi's most recent accomplishment encom-passed a significant presence in a three-person exhibition at O Art Space Lahore in January 2023, Notably, Qazi holds the distinction of being the first artist to exhibit a non-fungible token (NFT) in a public art gallery of Pakistan, a feat that has earned him recognition within significant art market-places.

He was a resident artist in the Studio RM residency program of 2022. Presently, Qazi assumes the role of a drawing instructor at Studio RM, contributing his expertise to the development of emerging artists. Further more, he also collaborated with notable platforms

such as 'Odd Bird Art' and the 'Pakistan Art Forum', reinforcing his dedication to host diverse artistic dialogues.

Qazi inquires the heightened forms of visual realism, while what is depicted as his pictorial realization is motivated by an inner authenticity. Interested in representation of figures as arrays, his paintings have a strong existentialist character that represent fragments of a mosaic of human life and the experiences that he painterly transforms into mysterious banality.

7. MIRZA ZEESHAN HUSSAIN

Mirza Zeeshan Hussain (born 1993, in Gilgit) is a Pakistani contemporary artist. He is currently working as an artist and an educator in Lahore. Zeeshan studied at the National College of Arts Lahore in Pakistan, where he was taught the traditional discipline of Indo-Persian miniature painting. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts. He works in various mediums including painting, miniature painting and sculpture. His works have been featured in, "In the Tiniest Stir" at Chawkandi Art Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan (2023), "Tranquility" at O Art Space, Lahore, Pakistan (2023), "Ruminant" at Chawkandi Art Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan (2023), "Flower of a Blue Flame" at Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan (2021), "Obscure dreams of Fear and Desire" at Satrang Art Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan (2017), "Fuse-Protogenesis" first Sino-Pak tour exhibition held at various cities of China (2017), "Ibtida" at Studio Seven, Karachi, Pakistan (2016), "Green Signal" at National College of Arts (2016), and also has undertaken an artist residency at BQ Studio in (2016).

Zeeshan's work has been very personal to him, which he feels is reflection of human reality as member of the world. In his words, "Each individual carries a baggage with him/herself". He uses soft toys in his work to represent the vulnerable nature of humans. His work explores the reality of every individual in the society. His approach toward image making is result of traumatic experiences and he believes that we are all made of traumas and collectively these traumas unify and you can't tell one from another, moreover, these emotions can't be suppressed, thus takes its form as huge baggage the weight that we carry till our last breath.

8. BAZIL HABIB

Winner of the Arjumand Painting Award 2023, Merit Prize, Bazil has participated in many shows, which includes "Disparate Voices" at Khaas Contemporary Islamabad (four person). Eclectic Mix 3.0 a Sanat Gallery initiative Karachi (group show), Potpourri at Koel Gallery Karachi (group show), Windowsills at Artescape Islamabad, Pakistan (group show), Semblance at O Art Space Lahore, Pakistan (three person), Lines, Spaces And Everything In Between at Pakistan Art Forum Lahore, Pakistan (three person), A Voyage at Satrang Art Gallery Islamabad, Pakistan (group show), Well, Come Back Home at Koel Gallery Karachi, Pakistan (group show), Stars Of Tomorrow at Pakistan Art Forum Lahore, Pakistan (group show), Et17 at VM Art Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan (group show), Musings of Deserted Mind at Ejaz Art Gallery, Lahore Pakistan (group show), Identity at Ejaz Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan (group show), The New Odyssey at Pakistan National Council of the Arts PNCA, Islamabad, Pakistan (group show) and Broadcast Volume.2 at O Art Space, Lahore Pakistan (group Show)

Bazil explores in his work the impact of color on human psyche, he is fascinated by the power to create emotional responses. He uses the colors very boldly and explore the interplay of colors, creating chaotic compositions that engages the viewer in a trance, in his own words that, "engage the viewer on a visceral level"

His inspiration comes from his love for night photography, particularly urban scenes with rich, saturated colors and he capture these scenes in paintings by distilling and deconstruct the fragmentary and shapeless memories into precise minimal and geometrical forms. The overlaying windows, steps and spaces in his paintings are a metaphor for the complex and often fragmented nature of the human. His art seems to create a dialogue between the viewer and the work, evoking emotional responses that transcend language and culture, like the work of true storyteller.

9. MUDASSAR MANZOOR

Mudassar Manzoor was born on 1979 in Lahore, Pakistan. Graduated with BFA degree from the National College of Arts-NCA, Lahore in 2005; worked at nca from 2007 to 2010 as a visiting lecturer. He has had numerous solo and group shows, some of the selected ones are listed here. Rung Dey" Koel Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan; **(2019)**"Awakening" O Art Space, Lahore, Pakistan; **(2018)**"Shahnama—A Journey Towards The Self" Chawkandi Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan; **(2016)** "Recent Works" Emerge Gallery, Paris, France; **(2015)**"I washed the dust of the eyes with blood" Koel Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan; **(2014)**"Once we were in Heaven" Artscene Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan;**(2011)**"The River Runs Dry" Rohtas II, Lahore, Pakistan; **(2009)**"Fallen" Gandhara Art Space, Karachi; **(2009)**"Contemporary Mniature Paintings" Frey Norris Gallery, San Francisco; **(2008)**"Surreal Narratives" Experimental Gallery, Hong Kong Art Center, Hong Kong; **(2008)**Gandhara Art Space; **(2007)**"Belief" Ejaz Galleries, Lahore.

The group shows from 2006 to 2024 includes: "Aamad" at O Art Space, Lahore, Pakistan , "Story of land" at O Art Space, Lahore. "Past, Present, Future" at Koel Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan. "Every Second Counts" at Tanzara Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan. "Shanakht" at O Art Space, Lahore, Pakistan, "Black" at O Art Space, Lahore, Pakistan. "Lock Down" a collaborative online exhibition of Pakistani & Malaysian Artists, at O Art Space Lahore, Pakistan & KL City Art Gallery, Malaysia. - "Its About Body" at O Art Space, "Art for Education-Contemporary Artists from Pakistan" at Museo Diocesano Carlo Maria Martini, Milan, Italy. "Reflection" at Sanat Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan. "Narcissus Reborn", Sanat Gallery, Karachi, "Kaleidoscope: A new perspective on contemporary Pakistani Art" at Asia House London, U.K; "Silsila" at Sanat Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan; "Resilient Ambassadors" Gallery 6, Islamabad; "Indo-Pak Masters" International Creative Arts Center, Mumbai; "Main" Koel Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan; "Contemporary Pakistani Art" Buenos Aires, Argentina; "Contemporary Shahnama Exhibition" Prince's Foundation Gallery, London - Slick Art Fair, Paris, France - Art Expo, Malaysia; Hong Kong Art Fair; "Different Drummer" IVG, Karachi; Galery Artes, Paris; East-West Center Galery, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA; Pyeongtaek Art Festival, Korea. - "From Lahore to Montmartre" Paris-Nice. -Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore; National Exhibition, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore; ITC Mourya Shereton, Delhi.

Mudassar received Best young painter award by Lahore Arts Council in 2006.

Muddasar believes that reality of mysterious univers as explained by Sidharatha (Buddah) "Form is Emptiness & Emptiness is Form." His work is exploration of the univers, through which he trys to find himself. Trained as miniature artist he uses the miniature technique to his best, one can see the passion and love for artmaking in his work. I have been following his work for many years, one word which define his work is "dedication". His work shows brilliance and mastery over the technique of image creation. He has a very humble personality and he believes that his work speaks many languages, thus touching the heart of viewer and take them to a journey of marvellis of the universe, in a way one travelles through the milkyway exploring the mystries of universe.

10. WASEEM AHMED

Waseem Ahmed is a Pakistani artist born in Hyderabad, Pakistan, in 1976. He graduated with honors in Miniature Painting from the National College of Arts in Lahore in 2000. Ahmed currently lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

Waseem has displayed extensively solo and group shows nationally and internationally since year 2000, Pakistan, USA, Switzerland, Germany, London, Belgium, Canada, Greece, Dubai, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Japan, Taiwan, Hongkong, Australia, Turkey, China, Lebanon, Jordan, Italy, France, Dubai, Waseem Ahmed participate in Karachi Biennale 2019 and Kathmandu Triennale – 2017. He has been a part of many national and international workshops and residency programs. His work has also been auctioned in prestigious auction houses like Sotheby's, Christie's and Bonhams since 2008 till dated. His work is also in Private Collections of *Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin* and *British Museum London*. Since 2017 - Appointed as Nominator for the Sovereign Asian Art Prize.

Publications: -

Christine Bruckbauer, *How come vajrapani meet Taliban warrior in the woods of north India?*, Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift, Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für indo-asiatische Kunst, 19 - 2015

Salima Hashmi, *The Eye Still Seeks, Pakistani Contemporary Art*, Penguin Books India, 27 Jan 2015

Katrin Bettina Müller, «Die Wiederkehr der heiligen Krieger», TAZ.DIE TAGESZEITUNG, NOVEMBER 2014

Virginia Whiles, *Art and Polemic in Pakistan: Cultural Politics and Tradition in Contemporary in Miniature Painting*, International Library of Cultural studies, Tauris Academic Studies, 2010

Ali Salwat, *Journeys of the Spirit: Pakistan Art in the New Millennium*, Fomma (Foundation of Museum of Modern art) in association with Pakistan National Council of the Arts, Pakistan, 2008

Athar Tahir, *Pakistan Colors*, Oxford University Press, 2001

David Rukhsana, *Contemporary Miniature Painting in Lahore 1980-2007*, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore

Waseem Ahmed hails from the generation of artists who initiated the movement of the 'contemporary miniature' in Lahore about fifteen years ago. In Pakistan, the traditional miniature has been a starting point for many contemporary artists who have honored the technique as cultural heritage, while reinterpreting and reinventing it in their own way. Ahmed has distinguished his work by producing creatively incisive images with innovative stylistic and iconographic contributions within a practice that is rigorously traditional, placing him among the most acclaimed contemporary artists of his kind.

Working in a variety of sizes, Ahmed combines drawing, gouache, pigments, and gold or silver leaf on Wasli paper, his substrate of choice. At the heart of his imagery lies the human figure and the boundaries that divide humanity in relation to his own historical, social context, and in close connection with the conflict and displacement that tinge our current time. His rich vocabulary of images often refers to mythology or history, both Eastern and Western. His work bridges the cultural heritage and the turbulence of the time.

11. JAMIL BALOCH

Jamil Baloch was born in Noshki, Balochistan in 1972 and graduated from NCA, Lahore, in 1997, where he is currently a faculty member. Belonging from a rich cultural heritage, he incorporates the traditional models with modernity in his art. Besides 14 solo shows to his credit in Pakistan, he has also held solo shows in Couadro Art Gallery, Dubai (2013) and Vermont Studio Center, USA. (2011). Jamil has also participated in several group shows in Pakistan and abroad in 14 countries including Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Srilanka, UAE, UK and USA. He has attended several art residencies like Art Omi (USA 2015), Vermont Studio Center (USA 2011), Theertha, (Srilanka, 2006), George Keyt Foundation (Srilanka, 2004), Vasl International (Pakistan 2006). Jamil is recipient of Rangoonwala Award in National Exhibition of Visual Arts (2003), Honorable Prize in International Art Biennale Bangladesh (2008), Young Artists Exhibition, Lahore (1993), Balochistan Family Planning Competition (1994), Winsor Newton Competition (2000), National Exhibition Visual Arts, Lahore (2003), International Artist Camp in Sri Lanka (2004), and in an international art competition in Jeddah (2007).

Jamil Baloch is a humanist who believes that all humans are equal and his work is representation of issues which concern humankind. Jamil doesn't believe in boundaries created by social behaviors or geographical boundaries, his inspiration comes from all the places where human issues arise. He is a keen observer of nature which is not merely the area he was born in or area he lives in, his canvas absorbs the inspiration from world over.

Experiments with materials to create vivid imagery which is mesmerizing and engages one deeply to tell a story. For me he is a storyteller who gathers his stories from nature, from people around him, all in all the human stories of survival. He has worked in different mediums like sculpture, drawings, paintings, video and mixed media.

12. R.M. NAEEM

R.M. Naeem was awarded President's Award for the Pride of Performance 2023, and National Award, 2003 Provincial Award (1991 and 92), born in 1968 in Mirpurkhas, Pakistan. In

1993 he graduated from the National College of Arts, Lahore with a distinction in Fine Arts. He has been a part of the permanent faculty (Assistant Professor) at NCA since 1994. In 2019 he was awarded Associateship of the National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan.

In the past twenty-seven years, he has held 20 solo shows both in Pakistan and abroad and curated various shows of local and international artists. Moreover, his work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally in numerous important group shows nationally, such as; The Asian Art Biennale Dhaka Bangladesh 2004 and 2006, The International Artists' Biennale Iran 2006, The Pyeongtack International Art Festival Lake Museum Korea 2006 and 2007, Art Expo Malaysia 2010, Slick Art Fair Paris 2010 France, Affordable Art Fair Singapore 2011 and Affordable Art Fair Melbourne 2012, Australia, India Art Fair 2014, Delhi India, Sindh art fair 2014, Karachi, Pakistan, Jaipur art summit 2014, Jaipur India, in 2012 he was selected for Saatchi online artist, 100 curators 100 days show, 2019 Tsinghua University Art Museum, Shanghai, China, Karachi Biennale 2017, Karachi biennale 2019, Art Fest, Karachi 2022, etc. Other countries that have shown his work at various times are; Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Oman, Bahrain, UAE, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Paris, USA, UK, Germany, Norway, Canada, etc.

As a participant in various juried art residences, he has attended 17 art camps and residencies abroad over the course of his career. He has also conducted various art-counseling workshops both in Pakistan and abroad. In 2015 he was selected by the Embassy of China to experience Chinese art and culture, as well as to represent and promote Pakistani art and art education in six cities in China. He represented Pakistan in New York at "New Pathways, Contemporary Art from Pakistan" curated by Tanzara Art Gallery, organized by the Pakistan Embassy, United Nations. Since 1994 he has been promoting art through educational activities at his studio 'STUDIO RM'. In 2008 he initiated the Studio RM (International) Residency program in Lahore, Pakistan. In 2018 Naeem was shortlisted for the Erasmus+ international credit mobility staff teaching week at Middlesex University, London.

R.M. Naeem's work has garnered several scholarships, awards, and prizes in Pakistan, including the Provincial Best Painter Award 1991 and 1992, First Prize Best Short-Short Film category in Punjab Film Festival 2014, Lahore, Summer Film Festival 2014 Mainz (Shortlisted), Kunsthalle Mainz 2014 (Shortlisted), National Award of Excellence 2003, Sadqain's Pride of Performance award in 2021, and in 2023 President's Award for pride of performance. His work can be seen in various private and official collections and has been featured in both local and international art publications. Naeem lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

In his artistic exploration, Naeem delves into the profound theme of forgiveness and renewal after death, he uses different symbols in his imagery like coffin and the book. He explores the realities of life, delving into the profound concept of life after death as depicted in various religions. Through his etching print of a coffin with plants and trees sprouting from it, and in another etching print of a boy reading a book, aiming to symbolize the eternal cycle of life, death, and rebirth.

His artwork serves as a visual metaphor for the belief in resurrection and the continuity of existence beyond the physical realm. The imagery of life emerging from death reflects the spiritual essence of renewal and regeneration that is inherent in the religious understanding of the afterlife.

Furthermore, by incorporating elements of environmental pollution into the composition, he draws attention to the interconnectedness of life and the urgent need to address the environmental challenges that threaten our planet. The juxtaposition of growth and decay highlights the delicate balance between life and death, underscoring the importance of environmental stewardship and sustainability.

He invites viewers to contemplate the interconnectedness of life, death, and the environment, prompting reflection on individual and collective roles in preserving the beauty and vitality of our world for future generations. For me he is an artist with heart of gold who is sensitive to the surroundings and is always ready to play his role as artist to address to the issues of mankind, trying to make this world a better place.