

It was a historic art moment for Pakistan as artists won awards both at Dubai and Sharjah in March 2011. Imran Qureshi's spectacular site-specific work, *Blessings upon the land of my love*, made him the winner of the highest award at the Sharjah Biennial 2011. Aisha Khalid's *Kashmiri Shawl* enjoyed a place of prominence in the foyer of the Sharjah Art Museum. Among the five winners of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize 2011 at Art Dubai, two winning entries were from artists of Pakistani origin. Hamra Abbas's stained glass window *Woman in Black* and Shezad Dawood's *The New Dream Machine* proudly took their place in the 'winners' courtyard'. At Art Dubai Rashid Rana, Faiza Butt and Shazia Sikander had booths dedicated to their latest work. Several other galleries also showcased Pakistani talent.

To see a Zahoore Akhlaq work at the Green Cardamom booth, an artist who was a mentor to the young Pakistani artists who received laurels, sharing this moment of glory, was both important and appropriate.

NUKTAART brings the achievements of these artists to readers in this issue.

On his Birth Centenary, **NUKTAART** pays tribute to the poetic genius of Faiz Ahmed Faiz by exploring the common ground between Faizian philosophy and visual arts. The emotive iconography of the poet, with blood and roses as motifs of love and pain is brought into discussion by Asif Farrukhi. Another article focuses on the work of three prominent artists, who like Faiz, focused their oeuvre on the struggle for human rights.

With an aim to involve 2000 artists and art students mainly from South Asia, where Faiz is read and admired, **NUKTAART** with its partners Aman ki Asha (Geo Network) and Progressive Writers Association, has organized the Faiz Art Prize which invites participants to address a *Postcard to Faiz*.

Expanding on the theme of subversion, Rumana Husain in her research discovers the making and re-making of socialist icons in different national and ideological contexts.

'Dream City' by Christine Bruckbauer, reports on the pre-revolution people's initiative to convert the historical quarter of Tunis into an art space. As the people of Egypt and Tunisia are redefining the politics of the Middle East, it dominated the art and debates at Art Dubai and the Sharjah Biennial. Jack Persekian, the then Director of the Sharjah Art Foundation, dedicated the 2011 Biennial to 'the spirit of change and young souls who are leading the revolution in the Middle East'. Ironically the day after the Biennial was inaugurated UAE sent its troops to crush down the unarmed people's protest in neighbouring Bahrain.

Simone Weil also writes about the changing mood that made political art a hot favourite with buyers at Art Dubai as an increasing number of galleries displayed the Arab artists' spontaneous response to the optimism emanating from Cairo and Tunisia.

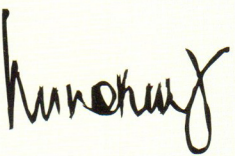
NUKTAART has initiated Youth-Lens, a project for young photographers which will enable them to print images from their portfolio in the publication. The works of Eefa Khalid and Marium Ismail have been selected for this issue.

Also featured is Agha Abbas's collection of industrial photographs in our regular Photo-Essay with images that have the power to surprise with its hard edged elegance.

The relationship between art and societal issues underpins the discussion in Nukta-e-Nazar and the urgent need for a local framework for artists and curators that can make interventions like *No Honor in Killing* more relevant to the community.

Imagining Cities at Amin Gulgee Gallery with New Media Art from the African continent, juxtaposed with art from Pakistan conveyed the urgency of the city as it negotiates the past and present, as it hurtles towards an uncertain future, this rare South South art experience both informed and challenged the audience. Amra Ali in her essay examines the many layers of this curated show and calls for "proactive discussions on the subtext/s that emerge now and will continue to do so".

NUKTAART has reinforced the importance of an interface and in the last 5 years given a voice to concerns of the South like Censorship, Environment and the Art Diaspora among others. This has helped contributions from developing communities to set the agenda for the debate.



Niilofur Farrukh
Editor

Rumana Husain Amra Ali
Senior Editor Senior Editor

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