

The year 2007 will be remembered for the inauguration of Pakistan's first National Art Gallery (NAG) in Islamabad. Its significance was further enhanced by the country's largest assembly of art and a rare interface between early masters and contemporary art.

The multiple facets of this momentous event are the focus of this issue.

Amra Ali explores the significance of this new journey, what it means for artists to finally have an institutionalized space for the intellectual and artistic nourishment of our art: past, present and future. In her essay, Sara Mehmood chronicles the history of NAG that runs parallel to the politics of Pakistan since 1981. Also included is the architect's statement with his design philosophy that informs its blueprint and choice of material.

*Nukta-e-Nazar* with Jamal Shah, Director of the NAG, presents his life and work as an artist, and the vision he brings to the new assignment. In the Photo Essay, Karachi-based photographer, Amean J focuses his lens on the fortress inspired brick façade and the nuanced interior of the exhibition spaces.

**NUKTAART** continues the theme of 60 Year Celebrations of Pakistan with an exclusive translation of Chughtai's writings by Inayat Husain. This explores the historical and cultural environment that gave impetus to his art and made him one of the eminent painters of early 20th Century in South Asia. From Egypt, a country close in age to Pakistan, Ahmed Fouad Selim sends a historical narrative to help us explore similar trajectories within the art, of both the young post colonial nations.

Exploring international art, Robert Lawrence contributes his reading of the oeuvre of three Iranian artists in the context of identity issues and iconography. Nadia Kurd's commentary on improvised mosque designs of Canada extends to the Islamic identity in the Diaspora. The 4th Ceramic Biennale 2007, Korea, is viewed from the perspective of a participant by Kristine Michael, and Halima Casell's exquisite carved clay objects is the subject of John Holt's article. A comprehensive review on the seminal retrospective *The Age of Discrepancies* in Mexico City draws attention to the emergence of a new confidence, as history is reclaimed through research. Subversive alternative strategies of Mexican artists during the thirty year long authoritarian rule remain central to the debate.

From the world of music, **NUKTAART** brings the *Sahel Opera*, the first ever African opera that took Holland by storm this summer. Koulsy Lamko, one of the writers of the Opera evokes the spirit of this shared odyssey of African musicians and singers. For long a dream of the late Prince Claus, it was recently turned into a reality with the efforts of his foundation, The Prince Claus Fund.

In this issue, Lahore's eminent architect and art collector, Nayyar Ali Dada shares his masterpieces in the permanent collection of the Nairang Gallery with Huria Kazmi.

Two book reviews come from different ends of the art spectrum. One is based on carefree and spontaneous art from children, and the other is from a highly skilled visual expression of an aviation artist.

With this issue **NUKTAART** begins its three years in the relatively unexplored territory of art periodicals in Pakistan. As we look to the future, our belief is reinforced that art is a potent force in the contemporary culture of Pakistan. One of the objectives of NuktaArt will be to generate an awareness of the vast social and intellectual promise it offers to the nation.

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Editor

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