

Hybridism, fusion and interface are the mantras of contemporary arts. They are indicators of a world gearing up for a free flow of a non-hierarchical exchange of ideas to construct a new present.

Satellite television, with its global footprint, and the more focused access via the Internet, has dissolved barriers. However, what makes us stop short of a universal culture is a strong sense of history and identity. Culture, like a resilient membrane allows the osmosis of influences, yet separates the 'self' from the 'other'. In such an environment, hybridism becomes a tool. It is as much an attitude as a device that creates space for the contemporary without abdicating other identities.

We discuss hybridity, particularly in the context of contemporary visual art.

Amra Ali provokes a debate on how the artist faces the danger of becoming a stranger to her/his location with the 'ethnic gaze' of an outsider. If appropriation is without deeper engagement it can transform borrowing from popular/traditional art forms into an act of consumption.

The history of Installation Art in Nepal, by Sangeeta Thapa, presents an interesting subversion of this art form to reach a larger audience in the public space. She writes how the idiom of this art form has been indigenized to support the strong Nepalese content of social awareness.

In tracing the genealogy of Turkish Painting, Dr Jale Nejdert Erzen writes of the ongoing cultural dialogue with Europe, since the Ottomans. Her essay brings into focus the identity crisis of the mid 20th century that compelled Turkish artists to ask 'How can an art which is both Turkish and Modern be created?' - a question, not far from the minds of artists from over 30 nations, at the 12th Asian Biennale 2006 in Dhaka, of which **NUKTAART** carries an introspective observation.

Moving away from content, Rumana Husain presents the mysteries of material and technique with a discussion on how the Neo-Miniaturists, despite rigorous training in purist skills, are integrating innovative processes.

The book, *Race-ing Art History: Critical Readings in Race and Art History*, reviewed by Dr Leon Wainwright reminds us that cultural exchanges have not been without the politics of power. Dealing with racism is an integral part of the art discourse, as the grand narrative of the West has long been a club closed to subaltern cultures.

Interestingly *Funk Carioca: Favela Rap*, an indigenous expression of the marginalized in Brazil has the pathos and power to catch the imagination of mainstream music makers. This story is told by Asma Husain and Vincent Rosenblatt from the favelas of Rio De Janeiro.

NUKTAART with its commitment to extending the discursive space has this time included an important essay on the informative research of Dr Boivin on the popular iconography, developed and sold around the shrines of the sufi saints in Pakistan.

We are honored to carry an essay by Jasleen Dhamija, one of South Asia's most committed craft historians. In reply to the news of the birth of **NUKTAART**, she emailed back telling us how much the name Nukta had inspired her. Out of this has come the multiple reading of Nukta, the dot, the point, in the light of South Asian symbolism.

This year, we lost two stalwarts of Pakistani art: Mian Salahuddin, the pioneer ceramist and long time teacher at the National College of Arts, who passed away after a prolonged illness, and the painter Nagi, one of the last of the first generation of artists who contributed to the nascent art scene. We are saddened by their demise and honor their memory.

As the readership of **NUKTAART** spans continents, it strengthens our resolve to expand the art discourse from Pakistan by bringing multiple viewpoints from home and other art communities.

We are happy to inform you of the generous grant that **NUKTAART** has received from the **Prince Claus Fund**, the Netherlands, which will enable us to consolidate our work.

NUKTAART has begun its second year. We would like to say to our readers and friends...we could not have done it without you!



Niilofur Farrukh
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left to right Niilofur Farrukh, Amra Ali, Sabiha Mohammed and Rumana Husain

Photography: Nima Alam