

Last year saw great peaks in the market particularly when modern and contemporary art from Pakistan touched all time high prices. In 2009, the mood is much more somber, as many lows are in the forecast.

The optimists feel that now the artists can get back to the business of making art, leaving behind the frantic art dealing and biennale hopping that has preoccupied them in the last decade. The artists might have to keep away from ambitious works as there will be few takers but there will always be prizes that will bring back philanthropy in art to retain excellence.

A discussion on gallery survival has also begun. The pundits predict that the top galleries in the multi-million dollar league will brave the storm with a trimmed staff and fewer perks but many mid-tier galleries who were dependent on the tail wind of the bullish market might just get sucked into the downward market spiral. Not-for-profit galleries whose shoestring budgets give them resilience will hold their own and are expected to emerge as influential facilitators.

In this uncertain economic climate new media art has the potential to emerge as a winner. Yes, the launch of high-end hardware and software launch may be postponed or made low key but the resilient innovator connected to grassroots issues of local and global urgency will remain effective with an ever growing interactive and low-cost cyber network.

This issue of *NuktaArt* investigates how a growing number of artists are transforming the conventions of art with the new technological idiom. From Pakistan and India, Amra Ali and Nancy Adajania, respectively, take up the multi-layered relationship between context and technology in contemporary art practice.

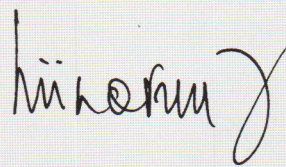
Locative Media: A Creature Void of Form by Dutch scholar Rob Van Karanenburg looks at creative initiatives that champion social and ecological solutions. Nameera Ahmad brings clarity to terms like *Narrative and Anti-narrative* as they are redefined by artists working with advanced digital technology. Pursuing the theme further, the *Photo Essay* in this issue comes from the camera as much as the computer of Khuda Bux Abro, a Karachi based artist.

Chinese art critic Xhingyu Chen looks at scale as a symbol of power and censorship at the Shanghai Biennale that coincided with the fanfare of the 2008 Olympics. *Murals by the Master* by Salman Ahmed, founder of Sadequain Foundation in USA, is in continuation with *NuktaArt's* attempt to bring fragments of Pakistan's art history to its reader. The passionately collected art of Zishan Afzal featured in the *Art Collector*, an article written and partially photographed by Ilona Yusuf, comes from Islamabad.

Art Dubai 2009, where *NuktaArt* had a presence as a Media Partner brings comprehensive coverage of this significant regional event with Christine Buckbauer's overview supported by a more focused commentary on the spectacular performance art at the event by Rumana Husain. The readers will also be able to read details of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize and its 2009 winners.

For first hand input, *NuktaArt* speaks to Savita Apte, director of Art Dubai, who shares her vision for the present and future of Art Dubai in *Nukta-e-Nazar*.

Art Dubai has begun to put down its roots and synergize the environment with critical debate, artistic excellence and art trade. *NuktaArt* recognizes its inclusivity and relevance to a wider audience in a region where infrastructure for culture has yet to develop. A holistic model that responds to the pulse of the time yet offers a system where creative, intellectual and business interests are engaged is most likely to sustain art in this unpredictable century.



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