

It took only a few minutes to bury thousands of homes and millions of dreams forever under the rubble left behind by the most devastating earthquake in living memory. Perhaps the greatest and most unforgettable loss for Pakistan will be an entire generation of children who were fatally trapped within the concrete walls of their classrooms.

The world has joined the Pakistani nation in acts of unprecedented generosity and the art community too has begun to fundraise. The South Asian Gallery in Canada was the first to respond with an art auction. Artists generously donated works for a recent exhibition held at Nomad Gallery, Islamabad, in aid of the relief effort. This will be followed by a televised auction and other initiatives all over Pakistan in the months to come.

In this issue, **NUKTA** has selected to foreground museums - an important but untapped tool - to enhance cultural consciousness in developing countries. Five contributors identify alternative paradigms to address the issue. Dr Gulzar Haider suggests a break from museums that can become 'instruments of ideology and its attendant propaganda'.

Looking at our shared Islamic legacy with the Arab countries, **NUKTA** covers it from three vibrant centers. From Jordan we have the honor to share with you a critical piece on Arab Contemporary Art by Dr Wijdan Ali, the moving spirit behind art institutions in her country. The interview of Maysaloun Faraj from London underscores the resilience of the Iraqi artists and their endeavor to document Iraqi art in the Diaspora. The 7th Sharjah Biennale 2005 confronts questions of belonging as can be traced through the review of its catalogue.

A sneak preview of the book *A Post Colonial People in 'A Singular Journey: South Asian Visual Art in Britain'* - a chapter written by John Holt and Laura Turney is a 'scoop' for our readers. We thank the editors and publishers for making it possible.

On the request of **NUKTA**, Austrian curator and critic Simone Wille visited the Venice Biennale this summer to give our readers a first hand account of this mega art event. In her piece she discusses the changing trends and some outstanding works she viewed there.

I remember exchanging an email a day or two after 9/11 with Zarina Hashmi. Taking it all in her stride, she informed me that she could barely see New York from the haze that engulfed her mid-town artist's loft.

This renowned printmaker was in Karachi for a private visit, and **NUKTA** caught up with her to record her candid views on a life dedicated to art and the challenges of being an artist of the Diaspora, for *Nukta-e-Nazar*.

A much-needed health checkup of Pakistan's aging art collections has inspired the regular column on art restoration and conservation. Shakeel Siddiqi, a leading painter and art restorer, will answer our readers' questions.

We hope **NUKTA** will be the space where the voice of the art community can be heard and from where a critical discourse can emerge. A space where ideas resonate and new ones are nurtured.

See you on the same page in 180 days.



Nilofur Farrukh
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left to right Sabiha Mohammed, Nilofur Farrukh, Amra Ali and Rumana