

Blurb

The experimental practice of 4 Pakistani artists offered an engaging lens at Khatmandu International Art Festival.

Backend

**Kathmandu Art Festival ( KIAF)**

**Commissioner Pakistan: Niilofur Farrukh,**

**Year: 2012**

**Location: Kathmandu , Nepal**

**Curatorial Note**

**Semantics of Urban Ecology**

In response to the theme of KIAF , Earth , Body , Soul , Nameera Ahmed, Yasir Hussain, Adeel uz Zafar and Fraz Mateen showcased the ecological challenges faced in the urban context, where overcrowding and industrial activity has made cities a site of environmental crisis.

Starved of clean water and frequently flooded with polluted water, the megacities of the developing world, with its toxin laden air and water threaten vegetation that cuts down on their 'lung' capacity. Over production driven by over consumption in these densely populated centers generates an unsustainable carbon footprint.

Not just carbon emissions but industrial/ domestic waste disposal into coastal/ river waters have irreversibly impacted the eco-system, and Karachi, Pakistan's largest city, is no stranger to this. Al Gore's 'inconvenient truth' no longer seems a distant reality as climatic change and catastrophic natural disasters have shown the world in the last two years. Despite an enhanced awareness of the fact that air/water pollution knows no political boundaries and cannot differentiate between the Developing and Developed countries , the Protocols and Treaties of ecology have had limited success due to lack of political will and powerful capitalist lobbies.

Today the world's hope lies with creative thinkers who with fresh and imaginative strategies of awareness can give impetus to the paradigmatic change urgently needed to save Earth, Body and Soul, which is the theme of KIAF.

Nameera Ahmed's video piece 'Bloody Birds' looks at large scale breeding, slaughtering and human consumption of genetically modified chickens as a metaphor of ecological threat to human and animal life due to wanton mis-use of science by the food industry that disrupts the natural food chain.

Her previous work Aesthetics Pollution Sketches 1&2 presented the severe degradation of Mangroves due to pressures of development and pollution. With this first line of defense against hurricanes and tsunami weakened, the coastline of Pakistan is becoming increasingly vulnerable to natural disasters and loss of marine life.

**Adeel uz Zafar, an artist and illustrator of children's books highlights the inter-dependency of the regional eco- systems. Inspired by the ecological reality that most of Pakistan's rivers have their watershed in the Himalayan mountain range where Nepal is located, the artist has collaborated with writers from Pakistan and Nepal to create and illustrate a children's story to emphasize the shared environment that needs collective strategies of survival.**

**Body and Soul are central to Yasir Hussain's art based on community interface. Using digital technology to allow the common man to share their ecological anxieties, his work privileges grassroots concerns. Localizing the issue while simultaneously globalizing it, he seeks a deeper understanding of its impact on the lives of the people on the streets/bazaars of Kathmandu and Karachi. In the same spirit his video NERO, according to the artist, 'explores earth, culture, consciousness, the city and the intermingling of lives mental, botanical and in the flesh.'**

**The installation of Faraz Mateen captures the degradation of coastal ecology and its impact on avian, marine and human communities as they struggle to survive on the coastal fringe. His objective is to build a 'narrative of connectivity' as the plight of both man who is responsible for environmental dilemmas and the species that are compelled to bear its brunt, are both equally impacted by climate change.**