

**PUNJAB UNIVERSITY: THE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION,
THE PIONEERS IN ART FROM 1947 TO 1977**

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It has not been long since Pakistan came into the world of Art. The concept and trends given by specific area depends upon the social, historical and political areas. Artist himself is directly effected by these elements and because of their reaction he responds in creating an artistic impact. In the present day- world of satellite communication the thought and feelings travel a lot faster and incidental happening in other part of the world anywhere on earth create a deep impact on the artist's work. Artists language is his brush, canvas, or a piece of paper he uses, becomes the lone channel through which he shows his innerself.

The beginning of Pakistani Art had intialized on that very day when the first native had converted to Muslim in the Sub-continent. Glory of Muslim art reached at its peak during the Muslim rule in Indian Sub-continent.

It is now believed by Pakistani artists, that the Hindu culture is no more dominant and neither they wanted it to be. Two schools namely Bengal School of Hindu Gods and Lahore Oriental before partition were not acceptable to Pakistani artists after independence. Chughtai reaching his middle age at the time of independence had mastered himself in style and themes eliminated Budhist and Hindu elements and applied himself to the cultural historical motifs focussing on Pakistan's 20th century poet Allama Iqbal.

Allah Bux became the painter of Punjabi village

life instead of being Radha and Krishna's painter. Haji Muhammad Sharif and Sheikh Shujaullah were of the last miniature painter after partition in Lahore. They earn only by teaching and painting small commissions.

Every one belonging to art circle had to establish a different view for the recognition of their national identity. A serious effort toward the promotion and flourishing of art in Pakistan was made when it became a part of educational curriculum at Punjab University. For at least a decade and a half the graduates of the Punjab University pioneered the educational steering and art became an established profession. Other parts of Pakistan enjoyed this benefit. Today art has culminated with reference to rich experience of our past years.¹

Anna Molka Ahmad was born on 13th August 1917 in London. Polish and Russian by origin, Anna grew up in London. She received her formal education at Saint Martin School of Art and later at the Royal College of Art. She met Sheikh Ahmed who was painter and had taught for some time at the Central School of Art London. She married him in 1939 and accompanied him to India the same year. Sheikh Ahmed a fine painter and draftsman became Vice-Principal at the Mayo School of Art.

Anna Molka was pioneer of Art education generally in Pakistan and particularly in Punjab. She was given the task by Punjab University to create a new department and to start art Classes. As soon as the department was inaugurated, many Hindu, Muslim and Sikh girls from different colleges, like Lahore College, Islamia College, Mahavidiala College and Fateh Chand College immediately applied to join and showed their enthusiasm for art. In April 1947, she had on her roll

about 260 students but after independence in August 1947 she was left with only six Muslim students. Partition of the Sub-continent however was the first set-back. The University closed the department and when it reopened, the department was destroyed. The classrooms, equipments and supplies had been badly broken or looted. University authorities were not in favour and were reluctant to provide financial aid. Anna Molka was a determined person. She preserved, and gradually number of art students increased. It is interesting that the male students were allowed to join the Fine Arts Department in 1955. In 1965 she made the University agree to hire Khalid Iqbal as the first teacher for the boy's art classes.

Anna Molka was aggressive and exuberant artist. Her strong personality and fiery temper are expressed in her paintings. She worked in impasto with knife what added to the emotional urgency and force of her canvas. Usually she paints with skill and deftness. Her work aims at an expression which is well-formed as well as powerful. Her yellows, purples, oranges and blues appear to strike at a loud pitch.²

Anna's vigorous, colourful and impasto textural art were an extension of her irrepressible of aggressive personality. Her subject matter on the other hand was often sentimental in motifs. She painted every thing, land scapes, battle scenes, city scapes, religious subjects, historic land marks, numerous views, portraits of colleagues, friends other artists and even of strangest.

Though she was not absolutely religious person but was attracted to Islam because of its universal out-look and its brother-hood of mankind. She was converted to Islam in London when she was still a student at Royal College of

Art.

Anna Molka's works range from figurative compositions, festivals, to symbolical and allegorical pieces. She is among the few Pakistani painters who draw inspiration for common life and events. In her paintings the poor working people, the peasants are glorified and presented as noble and heroic figures with the dignity of labour. Her paintings portrayed courage and forbearance.

She said in the booklet published on the occasion of her single artist show at Lahore Museum, "My subjects are all of life, the morning stream of joy, grief, deprivation and religious expression". She also said, "An artist is psychologist in paint".³

Anna Molka's portraits have the variation of characters and moods. They are variable gallery of painter and important persons as well as all sorts of common places. She preferred to show the hardened in sympathetic and furrowed faces of old people, and to interpret this image she used knife not only to apply a rich impasto, textural surface effect, but to correct a persons inner life.

Marrian Habib records Anna Molka's as auto-biography of her development as a painter. "At first in my youth/practicised a more romantic expressionism, thrilled as I was by the sun, the warm heated and warm coloured people. My present expression still depict, Pakistani life and people but now the subjects are more serious, introvert and religious problems of spiritual life, she said were refugees, poverty, I draw in paint mostly knife and impasto colours, drawing is exaggerated for a meaning releasing the inner urge colours get thickness as emotion is around, either violent

or sombre".⁴

Zulqarnain Haider born in 1939. He studied under Khalid Iqbal at Punjab University and completed his Master's degree in 1964. He has had close association with Khalid Iqbal in style and philosophy. He is working as teacher in Punjab University since 1964 except for a period of four years. In 1972 Zulqarnain left Pakistan to join Ecole National Superiod Des Beaux Art from where he received his Diploma Superior Des Arts Plastique in painting and drawing. He received Bien Mentian that is distinction in both diplomas. According to Professor Guignbert, Head of Paintings Department at Beaux Arts:

"This rare achievement is due to the fact that he never availed himself of any vacation during his four years stay in Paris and instead devoted all his time to his work".⁵

In the words of his tutor on account of his outstanding work, the scholarship by the French Government had been specially extended from one year to a period of another three years.

During sixties and seventies Zulqarnain exhibited in solo exhibition. His earlier work is dispersed and impossible to record.

Zulqarnain Haider's colours are less saturated and his use of bright sap green is more pronounced and has given him a different style in comparison to his contemporary artist Khalid Iqbal.

Zulqarnain prefers to paint in arrylic. His painting reveals myriad of texture and substances in one limited visual space. His use of dark brown and purple made the painting soft. Use of fresh green grasses with blue and mauve create depth of colour perspective and feeling

Zulqarnain often seen using the dark spiky kikar tree against the glitting yellow-green fields being a typical feature of Punjab landscape.⁶

Zulqarnain is dedicated artist who works to the full of his capacity. He has been a teacher of skills and arts in the truest sense. He is simple, quiet and modest person with full of warm feelings. His painting behold the sincerity and express the virtual reality without modern pretension. Though he spent four years working intensely at paint, but one can not detect any faintest hint of being consciously modern. Zulqarnain remains concerned with appearance and also the specific form and texture of each object and his paintings also show the textural richness.

Zulqarnain as a landscape painter always seen fascinated with the agricultural land of Punjab. He painted number of small panel depicting the effect of light and feeling of space with small delicate bushes. These paintings were very attractive and were quickly picked up by collectors. He distributed, arranged, designed synthesized the painting on long horizontal panel which resulted as more compact painting. Compared to the wild areas of the Punjab landscape which has been selected by the painter may seem tame. But to paint any landscape as Zulqarnain paints it "you have to go and stand in the field, feel its heat and be there for hours".⁷

Zulqarnain Haider's paintings are in President House, Prime Minister's House, Pakistan Secretariat, National Assembly, Foreign Office, Islamabad, Lahore Museum, Permanent Art Gallery Lahore, Lahore Arts Council and private collections at home and abroad.

Zubeda Javed born in 1937 in Julendher. She

received her master's degree of Fine Arts in 1961 at the Punjab University with the solid academic back-ground. Zubeda evolved her style into free expression rather than the realistic expression of her colleagues who like her studied under Anna Molka. Her personal style began to stabilize them. Later, Persian miniature painting influenced her style. As she said, "I had been lecturing on Persian miniature painting at the University. At first I did not like them, but then, I got involved with that art form, and it might have given some ideas. Teaching at the Punjab University and family responsibilities were her priorities".

She never cared about personality nor she wished to push herself from public recognition and does not seek fame. She is simple, modest, quiet and steady painter, does not seek fame. Zubeda's first solo show was held in 1975 at Art Gallery Rawalpindi.

She often sketches from out-door sports and paints in her studies. Her subject matters are derived from urban, rural landscape and cityscape. Zubeda Javed says, "I have seen the pictures in my mind and I have seen the actual spot, then mix the two with my imagination".⁸

She always works with extremes. She paints small figures against huge mountains, tall trees and enormous buildings. She emphasizes on intuitive colour scheme which supersede their realistic interpretations of light and shadow. Zubeda paints landscapes to convey moods and highly refined visual expression. She usually spends five to six days on her painting in the studio changing the colours, till they suit or satisfy her mood and fulfil her aesthetic needs. She emphasized on composition and strong focus on centre of interest which is created through

suggesting light and colour of different elements painted in the picture.

Her composition contain variety of subject-matter ranging from houses, markets road builders, roads, and landscapes of seasons. Her palate is quite rich and varied from silver blues to reds and magentas. All colours are used to express the spirit of the subject and moods of the artist.⁹

Ajaz Anwar born in 1946 is one of the painters who take on interest in the historical buildings, and architecture. He is essentially a painter of old buildings and bazaars. He gets pleasure depicting architectural details or to record the delicate wooden balconies and decorative arches which is the identity of old Lahore city.

Ajaz Anwar joined Punjab University Fine Arts Department as a Lecturer in 1970 after the completion of his Master's degree.

He treats light with delicacy and picks high light with frugality to great advantage. It helps him to segregate his elements in painting which create atmosphere illusion. His contribution towards conservation and recording of old Lahore will always be cherished. The old architecture and venerable buildings of Lahore are now being pulled down for the modern commercial projects or disappearing slowly with the passage of time.

Ajaz Anwar completed his Doctorate in the History of Muslim Art and Architecture at Islamabad Technical University in 1973. In 1972 he went to Turkey. Back in Lahore after seven years, he again gathered his water colour tools and scouted in search of old Lahore. Ajaz

Anwar is an active member of Lahore conservation society. He takes numerous walks through the old city in search of spots and buildings to be restored or noting the sites to paint. He used to paint on the spots during early eighties with less detail and small scale paintings.

Now he sketches on the spot and paints in his studio. He does not paint the exact details of the site, but often alter or omit the drastic changes of electric lamps or telephone poles. He shows his mastery over time by combining element from different outdoor sketches.

His painting reveals various revival and cultural interpretation of old city. His special interest in carved wooden balconies, women in purdah looking down on the busy streets is a strong character of old Lahore.

Jharokas, bamboo shutters, or oriental dormer windows are characteristic feature of the city which Ajaz Anwar is always anxious to paint.

He has dealt with the minute detail of narrow streets with spontaneity and skill. He presents street level perspective in a realistic manner.

Khalid Mahmood born in 1936 got his M.A., LL.B. from Punjab University and Doctorate from abroad. Khalid Mahmood paints the city scapes and the architecture of old city. His interpretation extends from realistic to abstraction. He gives greater attention to the human figure, which are depicted in highly simplified forms. His paintings provide strong comparison with Anna Molka's depiction of old Lahore. Khalid Mahmood paints figures, architecture, crowds and shops in a manner as they are seen from a long distances. Figures are defamed and smeared with the brush stroke against the architecture

creating design. The paintings are executed freely dwelling with tall vertical architectural elements with an emphasis on the value of colours pattern and rythm. His colours have soft tonal value.¹⁰

Ghulam Rasool born in 1942 got his Master's degree from Punjab University and received his M.A. & M.F.A. Print making and painting from Northern Illinois University, U.S.A.¹¹

Ghulam Rasool basically is landscapes painter, firmly rooted to the Punjab University landscape school. He devides his paintings into lying horizontal fields. Buffaloes, village huts with vertical tall trees designed in oriental manner are slightly simplified.

In 1974 Ghulam Rasool left Lahore and went to Islamabad as Director, P.N.C.A. With the change of city, the change of style, colour and design, crept into his paintings. The flat effect of designed landscape turned into more realist vision. His brush strokes became bolder often freely rendered without unnecessary details. His subject matter reveals around the village scenes, but with new powerful sense of colour conveys the artist's mood and the season. His colour palette also became more vibrant with orange, red, pink and ochar. These colours make his paintings lighter and brighter. Though he firmly sticks to Punjab School of landscape, individuality in his bold brush strokes, simplified interpretation of nature and its relationship with human and environment.

He is the most successful landscape painter of Pakistan. As a student in early sixties Ghulam Rasool was realist landscape painter. After joining the Department of Fine Art, his trend changed towards abstraction. His

paintings became highly stylized landscape capturing the mood and visual essence of Punjab with browns, rich blues and grass greens oriented by red or orange. Clearly defined fields are dotted with umbrella shaped trees and sprinkled with village peasants.

The subject matter, composition, low key and highly saturated colour scheme closely resemble the paintings by Colin David during the same period.¹²

Ghulam Rasool has developed a distinct and individual style of landscape painting which is pure invention and little related to the objective reality, except in general way. The foliage of long tree is rendered by long curving diagonal strokes that create a beautiful tree vibrant and quivering. His landscapes are marked by rich green and redish browns spread here and there.

Ghazanfar Ali was born in 1941. He studied Bachelor of Arts with Fine Arts from Government College Lahore in 1965 and got his Master's degree in Fine Arts from Punjab University in 1967. He continued to teach there till his death. In graphic art, Ghazanfar Ali proved his merit, by producing work of competable quality. His landscape and flower are fascinating works in intaglio. The delicacy of form stands in a masterly just opposition with fiery colours. He resurrected print making several decades after Chaghtai's pioneering work. He participated in several group shows at home and abroad, Malin, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, London, Bonn, Madrid and Vienna.¹³

Ghazanfar Ali was one of the rare print makers in the country, who had kept himself away from indulgence in modernism. The delicacy and feeling with which he

deputed the moods of nature, few artists can compete with even in oil.¹⁴

Mrs. Qudsia Nisar born 1948 in Karachi. She received Gold Medal in her Master's degree of Fine Arts from Punjab University. After the completion of her studies she became Lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts at Punjab University and taught history of Western Art during early seventies. Later she returned to Karachi and started teaching at Central Institute of Arts and Crafts. She won many national and international prizes.

Her work is lyrical, rhythmic and full of movement. She renders her composition with boldness free brush stroke. She paints in water colour and corridorred one of the dedicated abstract expressionist water colourist in Pakistan.

Her swift and sweeping washes give the spontaniety and freshness to the medium. Her brush strokes most oftenly achieve. The feelings of novelty, innocence and directness of child's gaze peeping through colours. She combines philosophy of conscious, subconscious and balances her imagery power with live and colour. Qudsia always depicts the picture visualizing the passed moments of her life, her early childhood reawakened or recalled by some familiar vioces that struck her mind and pulled her back to the particular moment.

She says, "I try to go inside myself and paint from the unconscious. Some-times I leave my bed late at night. I just have to jump and paint".¹⁵

Qudsia bores to paints water colours and has preference for this medium. According to her water is

pure and liberating element that purifies and cleans. Thick Layers of oil paint and impasto have become lethargic to her while water colour is direct, free, transparent old keep. The pure ideas, give free dintinal flow to the movement.

Qudsia paints do not reveal or illustrate history, iconographic interpretation, and literature, but simply deal with personal experiences of her subconscious paradox. Her paintings cherish beauty and ugliness side by side because according to her both are real and important. She however controlled her compositions with the combination of spontaniety and skill without which artist may force to express the real route of the subject interpretes. The mystry and complexity of nature altered Qudsia more than humanbeing. Her work poses the simplicity and course of centuries.

Mr. Shah Mawaz Zaidi born in 1948. He got his degree of M.F.A. graphic design from Punjab University and began his career as Lecturer in the same institute in 1969. Since 1984 he is Chairman Department of Fine Arts, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Mr. Shah Nawaz Zaidi went to Nairobi where he was assigned as Art Director to an advertising agency from 1974 to 1982. He became a Creative Director with an advertising firm at Lahore from 1983 to 1984. He is a free lance illustrator for the last 30 years. Shah Nawaz has worked in different mediums which include oil, water guaches. Marble though being a very difficult medium did not hinder him in expressing himself.

Mr.A.R.Nagori was born in 1938. He graduated from the Department of Fine Arts, University of Punjab and did his Master's from there. In 1970 he organized the Department of Fine Arts in University of Sindh and

retired as its Chairman in 1995. He spent a life time in Jamshoro in the Department of Fine Arts, University of Sindh.

His moment of triumph came in an exhibition of his paintings at the Indus Gallery, Karachi. In the exhibition A.R.Nagori was an angry man who was protesting against poverty, tyranny and persecution under the repressive regime. Goya and Daumier were the two artists from whom A.R.Nagori could have learnt. His exhibition was a breath of fresh air.

After his retirement A.R.Nagori held a large exhibition at Chaukandi Art Gallery on ethnic motifs from rural Sindh. The hidden irony in paintings like wadera and downcast woman and sacafat was muted.¹⁶

Mr. A. R. Nagori's message is often too loud and his images are clear in the intention. He is socio-political artist. His paintings are not pretty in the conventional sense; they are however, powerful work of art that communicate through daring imagery.

In 1982 A. R. Nagori was one of the artists who were to meet the president of that time and his paintings were to be selected for the exhibition at the gallery of Washington D.C. But the exhibition was postponed by the Cultural Ministry which declared Nagori's work of art as purely political.

His paintings are mostly non-figurative work, brightly coloured and decorative. As a student from Punjab University from 1960 to 1965, he was taught drawing by Anna Molika Ahmed and Khalid Iqbal. Between two of them he would have confronted with bold

colours, figurative distortion and expression as well as value manipulation and brush control.

Ms. Mussarat Mirza is one of the rare artists who has turned to non-figuration when the general trend is to the contrary. Until recently she was remembered for mud houses, roof tops sleepy villages and women and children in the streets. In 1970's her paintings became simple, based on a single image or a few elements, a sunlight window, a shadowy valley or dark door ways.¹⁷

Ms. Mussarat Mirza chose to paint from behind the chader and chardewari. She was not in purdah outwardly, but a free woman from liberal family, who chose paintings as career. She accepted the situation of life in which she was born and lived the fire of protest and rebellion which burn in other female artists was a faint glow in Mussarat Mirza. She is an intensely personal painter like Zubed Agha, but the intensity is unrelieved by variety of subjects, colours or imagery. She accepted high walls and narrow labyrinthine lanes as the world of her art and found opening into and from them. In her abstract modern paintings it was neither Paris nor New York, but Sukkur, a trading town in Northern Sindh. She did not paint the town land marks; instead, it was her own inner life which borrowed the walls and lanes of the town. She was born in Sukkur comes from Chughtai Turk family which came to India after Babar and settled in Kashmir and eventually in Punjab. His father came to the State of Khairpur Mirs in the late nineteenth century.

Ms. Mussarat Mirza graduated in painting from Punjab University, where Khalid Iqbal was teaching and she may have learnt her skill in tone control from him. She used an altogether different light which was not of

nature but of the innerself. She was appointed as Lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts, University of Sindh. She was deeply-rooted in the old value of way of life.

Ms. Mussarat Mirza's art developed figurative, representational paintings to abstract works after she had lived long enough with herself and felt confident to articulate her hijab in the proper language and expression of its own. She is not interested in clear visibility, but used light for rich tonal insouciance. She painted blindly from love of her own medium and used muted non-descriptive colours, earth brown with a mix of moss green, that we call Khaki, literally meaning of dust. She matured in the handling of tone over years without which she could not have interiorized her art. In her paintings blinding light spill from humble, mud plastered houses held in a squeeze between high walls. The light makes it own apocalyptic path to join the inside with the outside of house. For Mussarat black and white are two poles of light from which, she builds her earth tones.

Mussarat Mirza also changes from oil to water colours and lets reds and blues enter her work. She called this phase "A Melody of landscaper". She justifies a violent switch from her early works to something else for the sake of change only.

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