

PIONEER
ART
RESIDENCY

VOLUME II

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MESSAGES



ALY KHAN
CHAIRMAN

It is my great privilege to share the second catalog of our Art Residency Program with our stakeholders, partners and friends.

The program has evolved significantly in its second iteration involving globally renowned Pakistani artists Hamra Abbas, David Alesworth, Jahanzeb Haroon, Huma Mulji, Seema Nusrat and Nausheen Saeed mentored by acclaimed artist, critic and academic Quddus Mirza.

Pioneer Art Residency Volume II was especially noteworthy considering the active participation of technical staff at the Pioneer Cement Factory in conceiving and implementing the vision of the artists partaking in the two week program.

Once again I would like to strongly urge increased private sector participation and contribution toward the Arts in the country and thank those who enabled us to achieve continuity in our vision for the long term organizational growth of Pioneer Cement; without them this project would not be a possibility.



ARIF HAMID DAR
MD & CEO

In continuation to Pioneer's vision of promoting talent and praise work of Art, the second volume of "The Pioneer Art Residency" is presented to please your eyes and mind. We feel privileged to have firsthand experience of observing the master pieces created by the renowned Artists under the leadership of Mr. Qudus Mirza. We also appreciate the curator of Canvas Gallery Mrs. Sameera Raja for her efforts of providing such platforms to artists so that they can conceptualize and create their imaginations.

These artists created the work of Art while residing at the plant premises, they were able to create ideas on the basis of what they observed and grasped from the surrounding. Pioneer plant is located at the village Chenki; 34 KM from Khushab which is considered to be the region with the finest limestone reserves. Pioneer management team took these artists through every process of manufacturing cement that they can understand the magnitude of our operations, versatility of processes and application of controls to minuscule level.

This event not only allowed the artists to display their skills but allowed our people to work with them in making the masterpieces. All the management and staff participated in this exhibition on the Finals with their families. Artists shared the thoughts related to their work and their experience of spending time at plant. These works of Art are on display for local community as well, it allowed promotion of Art not only within the organization but within the local community as well.

I am hopeful that this residency program will continue with greater participation and passion.



SAMEERA RAJA CURATOR

There is no dearth of artistic talent in Pakistan. What we lack is awareness of the arts in general. Public art plays a significant role towards creating awareness. With this in mind, Canvas Gallery conceptualised the Artists Residency Programme in 2017.

The First Artists Residency Programme was initiated in April 2017 with our key corporate partner, Pioneer Cement. This comprised of 6 Emerging Resident Artists, who were mentored by 3 established artists.

The Second Artists Residency Programme was held in February 2018 and comprised of 5 internationally renowned visual artists : David Alesworth, Hamra Abbas, Huma Mulji, Nausheen Saeed and Seema Nusrat. They were ably mentored by internationally acclaimed Critic, Educationist and Artist-in-Residence, Quddus Mirza. The documentation of the 2 weeks Residency Programme was enabled by emerging Resident Artist Jahanzeb Haroon.

One of the most fascinating things that emerged during the Residency was the wholehearted and eager participation of the Resident staff and personnel of Pioneer Cement with the Resident Artists. The dialogue that was started between the Artist and the "Non-Artist" remains an interesting point of conversation. This opens doors to possibilities of engagement and ownership, which hitherto have remained undiscovered.

All of this would not have been possible if Pioneer Cement and its management had not embraced the idea of giving their time, space and capabilities with such generosity of mind and spirit. Every idea starts with a dream.

My sincere gratitude to all those who turned our dream into a reality.

RESIDENCY REVIEW



QUDDUS MIRZA MENTOR

Once you leave your home, place of work, or city of residence, you also abandon yourself, momentarily, in some manner. You put behind your habits, comfort, routine, family, friends, foes etc. You also get delinked from your bedroom, study, studio, office, workplace. This distance, brief or long, provides an occasion to review one's perceptions and reflect on one's practices. In a sense a creative person – a writer, visual artist, musician, actor, or dancer lives in eternal exile. Several authors, including Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Julio Cortazar, Adonis, Salman Rushdie, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Abdullah Hussain, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett spent parts of their lives away from their initial homelands. Some in forced displacement, others by choice, but in every case having a distance from their places of origin was pivotal to create works about those places, while living thousands of miles away.

A number of visual artists have also left their homelands, physically, but their works still reside in their abandoned regions. Two of the most prominent examples in this regard – from South Asia – are of S. H. Reza and A. J. Shemza; the former lived in France for many years, and the latter spent his life in England, but both produced works which were deeply rooted in the iconography of their homeland. In the contemporary Pakistani art, artists like Rasheed Araeen, Raheel Akber Javed, Rasheed Ahmed Arshad, Iftikhar Dadi, Shahzia Sikander, Nusra Latif Qureshi, Talha Rathore, Ambreen Butt, Fazia Butt, and Anila Qayyum Agha have been living away from Pakistan (recently joined by Naiza Khan and Huma Mulji), but in the works of some, the link with Pakistan is prominent, even though the audience can be different, distant and diverse.

Actually, an artist is a prisoner of his/her self, so no matter if you travel far, you are still inside yourself. Sometimes you strive to break that armour, but occasionally you also are content in that 'prison' of habit. Similar kind of dilemma one faces when one is part of an artist's residency. Not considering location, material, facilities or requirement, any such event enables a person to have a different point

of view: a point remote from ones' usual place of existence; working at a location that is new, and in company of those who would never have shared one's studio, or lived at the same premises.

This displacement, physical, is virtual too, because the artists, part of Pioneer Art Residency, as soon as they left the M-2, felt outsiders or aliens. Not being in a metropolis with flowing Wi-Fi signals, frequent cellular connectivity, facility of printing equipment, and fabrication of material with the help of specialized workers, yet they managed to create what was their initial idea – in response to space, situation and substance.

The changing scale of everything, from a tiny bit to a large mound of coal transported from the South Africa, from a small pebble to a huge boulder; from dust gathered at domestic items to spread of earth in a vast ground, inspired artists who participated in the second volume of Pioneer Art Residency 2018. These included Hamra Abbas, David Alesworth, Huma Mulji, Seema Nusrat and Nausheen Saeed. Jehanzeb Haroon documented works in varying stages of fabrication as well as installation.

The greatest challenge for each participating artist at the Residency was not how to pull out from the sumptuously laden breakfast table, but what to do when faced with the abundance of materials and immensity of possibility in terms of technical help and support. Sky being the limit was experienced in its true sense, since immense availability of resources engaged artists to move in every direction. A residency of this kind was not an occasion to explore the possibilities of material, and methods, but an excuse to experience a variety of creative processes; each participant approached location, material, and scale in individual manner.

In a sense the overwhelming presence of the factory, and surrounding area which provided raw material for cement had a dominating effect. Continuous sound of machinery, which was not avoided – no matter if you are inside your room; view of the factory seen from all sides; vast land with various kinds of soil, minerals, rocks; ability to use any equipment, overwhelmed the artists. Perhaps that period, living away from their studios and with other creative personalities, was essential in negotiating a link/balance between one's practice in a private space and at different venue shared by several others, which include fellow artists, factory officials, technicians, labour, domestic help, etc.

Within that group – consisting of personages of all types of experiences, qualifications, professions, specialities, and standing, I, a writer felt odd. Almost out of place (at a place that itself looked out of place – if not out of this world). What would a wordsmith do at a plant that is producing cement every second? Where huge tunnels transported coal and other raw material into a large kiln – that besides melting everything – almost presented a glimpse of hell. Where everyone was busy in the cycle of producing a useful stuff. Or an aesthetic object (like the artists invited to the Residency). Because merely reading books, walking into quarries, talking to artists about their works, and imagining parallel situations/scenarios do not seem fit for the task of a writer staying at that location.

But as a writer's job – sometimes, is to transport himself from that specific territory, and take his readers along in his flight of fancy; an art critic's work amounts to offering a different lens to view the artwork. To provide a different context to comprehend the creative process. To present a personal response on works which embody and unfold multiple meanings, separately yet simultaneously, for diverse viewers. In that sense a critic's work is of a cultural archaeologist who digs and decipher what-ever is deep down in the work produced by a creative individual.

At the Pioneer Residency, past was a preferable point for investigating the geography. David Alesworth has searched for the indigenous plants from that area, their documentation and description in historic texts. The work “consists of aerial photographic documentation of site-specific drawings made in a bed of bituminous coal and limestone dust. a tractor mounted blade and D85 Bulldozer were repeatedly used to prepare the drawing surface, alongside much manual labour. The motifs are drawn from the fossil record of the Carboniferous era and represent some of the species of plants that laid down these fossil fuel reserves up to 350 million years ago”. As the artist further informs: “Many of their close relatives are still living amongst us today, his work is a means to find a bridge between past and present; observation and recollection; experience and information. The Himalayan task of turning the turf of coal and dust as the drawing board and employing a bulldozer as a brush or pencil, has resulted in those images, which existed once, but now their memory in the form of pictures would be referred.

Alesworth, besides being a trained artist and teaching sculpture (in Pakistan and UK), also practices as a garden designer. He developed lawns of various houses in Karachi and some in Lahore,

combining his aesthetic sensibility as an artist and his expertise in the field of horticulture. Not surprisingly, because art is not limited to a certain medium, or a particular technique. Human beings express their aesthetics using a vast range of materials and methods. From drawing on the moist window of a car, to scratching a face on the bark of a tree, from making the outline of a figure on the sand, to depicting a stylized flower or animal using thread and needle on a piece of fabric. From arranging fruits at a road stall to decorate streets during the birth celebrations of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). David Alesworth, by bringing all these strands into his work, partly site specific, partly scientific documentation, partly poetic, takes on familiar realities and turns, and transforms them into complex imagery. His drawings, the outcome of that 'laborious' process seem like astronomical maps as well as the illustrations of colonial treatises on the geography of the area.

As Alesworth's work is connected to geography, the body of works produced by Huma Mulji is also related to location. A person who has spent a day at the cement factory observes the immaculate – almost imperceptible layer of cement powder coating every object, circulating in the air and sitting on fields. Huma Mulji, responding to that condition has created a set of photographs with patches of earth rendered in grey. The sensitive selection of her views, from specific locations in the factory and adjoining areas, are treated in a way that the pictures start to look like lunar landscapes. This merger, of two planets, two worlds, two views, in a metaphoric sense denotes the nature of an artwork – or the essence of art.

In my opinion every artist is a translator. Translation, derived from Latin word *Translatio*, which literally stands for 'carrying across' or 'bringing across', is a means to take from one territory to another land. Artists also perform the same task. They carry a person from one shore to other, often that traveller being themselves, prior to others. The work of art performs the magic of showing us another world, transporting us to another realm, while we are standing on a terra firma. An artist is a protagonist who uproots a person, takes him to unknown arenas, and brings him back. Something like what happens in the tale of The Thousand and One Nights, in which a man dreams, and enters into another destination, spends his lifetime, grows old, have children – but finds himself young and at the same place that he left, when he wakes up from his sleep.

In that sense Mulji's prints negotiate between two territories, one familiar, the planet earth, and other

its satellite the moon. The lyricism in these works, with sensitive details of surface invoke the memory of stepping on these paths, filled with gravel, pebbles and sand. The artist has managed to share that moment with the spectators, especially with her choice of tint, being grey, a kind of eternal shade. From the time universe was created colour was there, but due to its rendering through mechanical tools and technology (first monochromatic photography and later black and white cinema) it has been registered as/into shades of grey. Now with the advent of colour photography, movies, digital media, we recognize the world in colours (though nostalgic about black and white era) but who knows that there be another technology in future that will add another layers/lens to view the reality, hence transforms it.

Huma Mulji has altered another reality. The first day during my walk in the garden, I was surprised to find small trees with their bark scratched in the middle and red stain put on freshly peeled surface. I wondered if these were marks to put numbers on growing trees, or a remedy for horticultural disease, or some other inexplicable act; but Mulji has introduced another content in that scenario. In her photographs details of those section – coloured patches of plants are highlighted, and presented. These pictures, due to their pictorial quality, offer another – rather conflicting view of the situation. Bleeding barks, which could be a metaphor for the larger condition of a society that has suffered the worst period of violence and bloodshed. Yet the images – captured by her, can be read as elaborations on multiple tones of red, since the unconscious hand who applied medicament on these trees, did not realize that he is blending blood into a usual botanical medicine – conceptually. Interestingly these patches were there before the arrival of Residency artists, but no one conjured up that association, except the artists, signifying a creative individual views the world and imbibes new meaning into something as banal and as ordinary as a routine horticultural task.

The transformation of ordinary into something uncommon is witnessed in Seema Nusrat's work: The Other Storey, which has an interesting story. On her arrival, Nusrat kept contemplating on various possibilities, till she spotted a watch tower. That abandoned structure, a narrow but tall tower, was tucked at a side not frequently visited and viewed, so Nusrat decided to use that venue for her work. She went to a nearby town, photographed small houses, attracted by their strong colour, exuberant details, addition of elements which range from Baroque to Romanticism, yet all domesticated into a Punjabi kitsch vocabulary. Based on that documentation, she planned to transform the watch tower

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Her work deals with several issues of our existence. The idea of upward movement. Originality and reproduction, as well as the layers of description and deception. We live in a society, which thrives on the worldly goods and materialistic achievement, also it is endowed with a sense of exuberance. A simple statement is often looked down as a boring utterance, if not an irrelevant interruption. Unless one is able to coin phrases, which are adorned with adjectives and superlatives, a listener is not satisfied and satiated. The same preference for decorativeness is witnessed in the way local transport is decorated, mosques and houses in small towns and villages are constructed and painted.

Preference of a certain palette, bright, strong, vivid and jarring colours is the hallmark of an aesthetics, which is often ignored and discouraged by the sophisticated circles of art and culture (unless it is patronised, incorporated and used in high end products of art and design). Nusrat has picked that sensibility and converted it—rather recreated a structure, empty, yet encloses the idea of houses across the society.

The act of converting a watch tower into a house, is not merely a formal feat, but it alludes to current situation in a country coping with the issues of security through an increased level (not standard) of surveillance. In past Nusrat has been addressing this site/side of conflict, in her portrayal of buildings covered, almost hidden with piled up sacks. She drew a new kind of cityscape dominated by these items, which have become a 'normal' and essential component of our urban life. At the Residency,

Nusrat – having the same concerns, has shifted her position. Here she converts a security structure into a domestic building. Indicating and reverting back to how sacks in Karachi are used for purposes other than merely safety; “barriers put outside important buildings are now converted into planters. Presence and usages of these items confirm the way grim situations end up being domestic, familiar and routine like”.

The duality of meaning in a work – rather in any act of life is a point that captivates creative individuals. Nausheen Saeed in her two text based works *Vision* (carved marble slabs) has inscribed lines from Rainer Maria Rilke, verses which can relate to area, where the scent of nature overpowers despite the sound of machinery. The text connects to the act of exploring outside reality as well as the inner self. (Particularly due to its format and layout that reminds of an eye doctor's chart for sight test, hence the title *Vision*). Not directly associated with the space, the lines selected by Saeed, suggest the way one perceives a new venue, and if a person can ever leave his/her position completely? Is it possible to find a fresh vision not affected by previous observations? One feels that each new contact with reality is a contest – or conflict between ingrained views and urge to discover something new. Yet one often fails in that attempt, because soon system, tradition, convention, habit, custom and convenience take over; put a person to a comfortable zone; which in reality is a problematic position. Unless one dares to deal with past.

Her work executed in lines on marble slab, offers a changing view of the text, altered with the shift in the direction of light, so in a sense the inscribed word, start appearing like sounds, with their changing 'tone'. The sophistication of the work echoes her other text based pieces, she has created in past.

Especially *Mapping the Terrain* (1996), in which the artist placed plaque in a park in Wimbledon (London, where she was a post graduate student of Site Specific Sculpture), with some poetic, personal and lyrical lines such as: “One of these days I will send some flowers to my mother”, and “It is strange that in what strange circumstances and strange ways you miss people, and “In the loving memory of my previous years” and a few more. Words that invoked memory.

Several artists have been questioning the presence, power and place of past while thinking or making a work of art. One cannot cut ties, ignore or abandon past, since this exercise would be as impossible – and ridiculous as leaving one's body, name, parentage (we survive in a combination of flesh, bones,

skin, blood, veins that came into being many years ago – on our birth, in that past). We are recognized by a word that was made part of us soon after we were born; we come from a couple, who lived before us, and who in their turn were descendants of a long line/list of ancestors.

Like a human being, a work of art we see today is the latest stage of a lineage started many years/centuries ago. And like an intelligent person, who, instead of boasting about his family history, absorbs it, and his nobility is reflected/revealed through his conduct – a work of art is not about dragging history into it, but imbibing tradition in order to make us see heritage in a new form, angle. Hamra Abbas' Waterfall 2 "is based on a fountain located at Shalamar Gardens (17th century) in Lahore. Shalamar Gardens were laid out as a Persian paradise garden creating a representation of an earthly utopia where humans co-exist in perfect harmony with other elements of nature". Hamra Abbas has constructed her work, drawing her research from pictorial history – historical buildings and monuments of Lahore, but she is also able to introduce a new aspect into tradition of image making. "The design and dimensions of Waterfall 2 is an exact reproduction of the fountain in Shalamar Gardens, but created with an entirely new combination of stones that are quarried in Khushab." One speculates if the idea came first or the availability of material (stone) led to formulate the concept. One is aware of Abbas' recent work in which the artist is translating history in present day vocabulary, but her modus operandi is so subtle and superb, that one is astonished the way sliced segments of an image – derived from tradition – turn into works of abstract nature, works, which are about sensation of material and sophistication of shape.

Hamra Abbas searched for stones of different colours and kinds in order to construct her work. A quest that led to recognize the power of nature, the possibilities to explore it. Nausheen Saeed, in her Lightness of Being has made possible something that is not imaginable. She has suspended a heavy boulder on a structure made of scaffoldings. Lines which cross horizontally and vertically bear a big and overpowering rock (lifted from the area close to the factory). The contrast of straight lines with irregular contours of a rock if on the one hand offers a pictorial sensation, at the same instance it invokes a connection between two aspects of ourselves. Order and irregularity. We survive between organising ourselves and obeying our wild nature. Trying to control, convert and converge our desires, urges and impulses. Somehow Saeed's work addresses that conflict between nature and culture. Freedom and control, a battle that is waged inside us, as well as seen in different disguises and

manifestations in various spheres of society.

In its materiality, scale, grandeur and impact, Lightness of Being alludes to metaphysical questions as well. About fate, and destiny. About afterlife too, when dead bodies will be elevated, and return to a state of being – light or heavy (depending upon their deeds during the brief period of their lives on this planet). The work certifies and reminds that a human being, no matter how powerful, persistent, and strong to change his environment, had to depart, leaving stones, rocks and other elements of nature, that last longer. However, a person knows about his brief life span on this earth, yet he aims, plans and struggles to transform his surroundings, projects which are for distant futures: Books, artworks, music, buildings, institutions, reforms, etc. which outlive a mortal; but satisfaction for prolonging one's identity through a mark made in any form/format is more than achieving temporary triumphs. Similar to what artists experienced during the Residency. They were there for two weeks, not likely to return and see their pieces (unless invited again), but their work remained as their mark, and more than individuals', it was a sign of faith in art, at a place as far, remote and removed from mainstream cultural activities as Khaushab. One realizes that the experience was beneficial for the Pioneer Cement Factory, but it was fruitful for artists as well, since they saw themselves, their art practice, their concerns, their successes, their failures, their frustrations in a mirror, grand, gratifying, unique – and unusual.

ARTISTS

Hamra Abbas



David Alesworth



Jahanzeb Haroon



Huma Mulji



Seema Nusrat



Nausheen Saeed





HAMRA ABBAS

Born in 1976 in Kuwait
Lives and works between Boston (USA) and Lahore (Pakistan)

BIOGRAPHY

Hamra Abbas' work originates from encounters and experiences - an object, image or icon - that are manipulated by the artist transforming its scale, function or medium. She intends to deconstruct the act of seeing by recreating images that form part of collective memory. Unrestrained by subject matter or media, she takes an investigative approach to produce a diverse and holistic body of work addressing notions of cultural history, sexuality, violence, ornamentation, devotion, and faith.

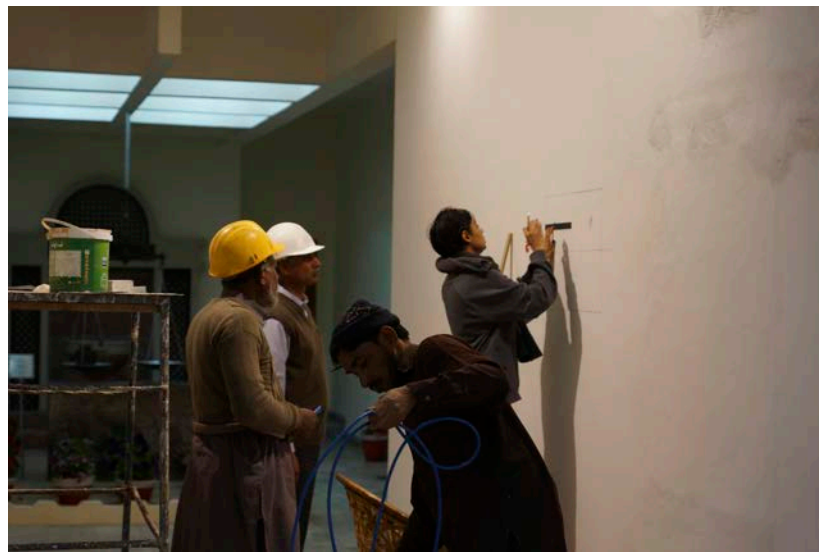
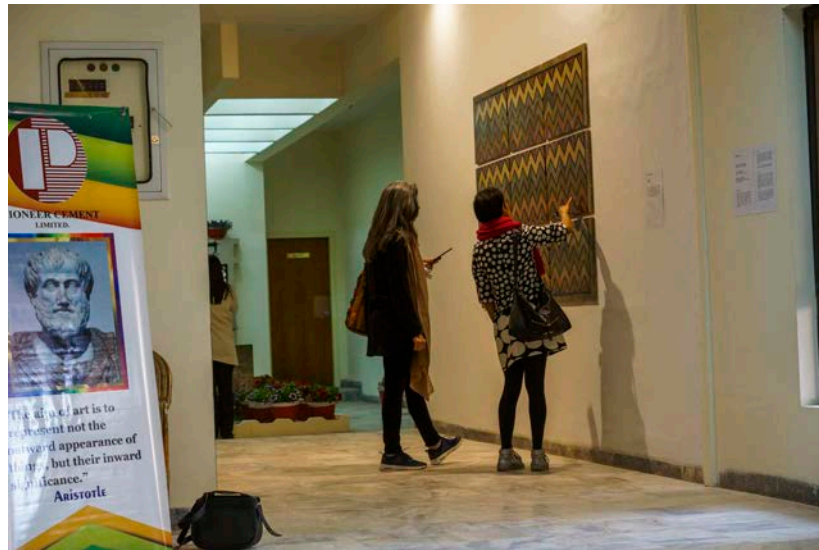
CONCEPT

Waterfall 2 is based on fountains located at Shalamar Gardens (17th century) in Lahore, designed as a Persian-style (charbagh) Paradise garden, and featuring 410 fountains. The design and dimensions of Waterfall 2 is an exact reproduction of the specific fountain selected from Shalamar Gardens. However, it is made with a different combination of stones that are quarried and collected from the Pioneer Plant (Khushaab).





Pioneer Art Residency







DAVID ALESWORTH

Born in 1957 in Surrey (UK)
Lives and works in Lahore (Pakistan)

BIOGRAPHY

David Alesworth is a sculptor, photographer and researcher of garden histories, working between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. He is former Head of Sculpture, IVSAA (1991-2002), and Professor, BA (Fine Art), BNU, (2006-2015). Over the past decade his work has been organised around an expanded vision of the garden as 'global forest' of which we are all part. The garden is his key metaphor with which to question humanity's culturally specific relationships with the natural world and to better understand the notion of nature as a social problem. His own hybrid identity as a Pakistani National of white British ethnicity informs many aspects of his practice. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of British Sculptors, and a Stanley Picker Fellowship award holder. In 2016, he was shortlisted for the V&A Jameel Prize.

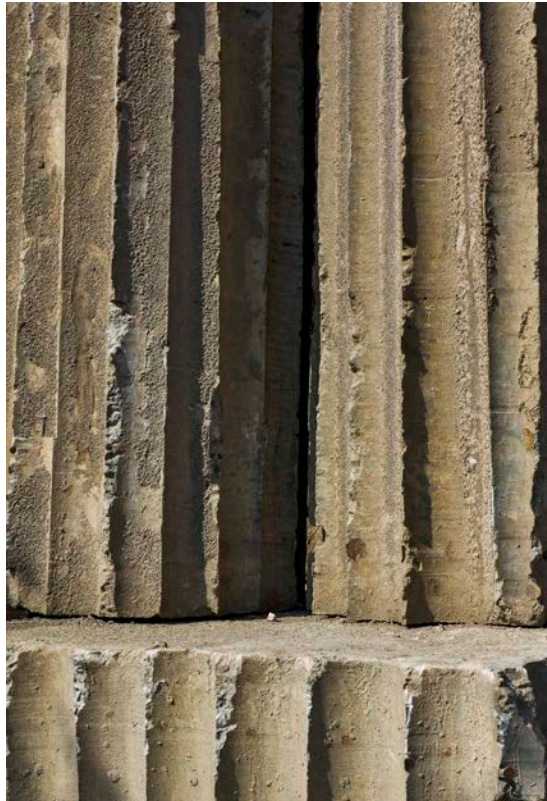
Alesworth's recent exhibitions include the Lahore Biennale (2018), Karachi Biennale (2017), Jameel Prize exhibition/s at the Pera Museum, Istanbul, (2016) the Asia Culture Centre, Gwangju, Korea (2017) and the A. Kasteyev State Museum of Arts, Almaty, Kazakhstan (2018). Other shows include Taqseem, Koel Gallery, Karachi (2017); The Missing One, OCA, Oslo (2016), How We Mark the Land, Gandhara-Art-Space, Karachi (2016); Hopes of Paradise, Grosvenor Gallery, London (2016); The Architecture of Life, BAMPFA, Berkeley University, California (2016); Dhaka Art Summit (2016); 8th Berlin Biennale, Berlin (2014).

David currently lives in Bristol and is a studio holder at Spike Island.

“Drawings in Time” (Prints 1-4)

The work consists of aerial photographic documentation of sitespecific drawings made in a bed of bituminous coal and limestone dust. Undertaken between the 9th-12th Feb. 2018 and photographed at 4.30pm daily. The drawing surface was approximately 95m x 76m (310 x 250ft) and a tractor mounted blade and D85 Bulldozer were repeatedly used to prepare the drawing surface, alongside much manual labour. The motifs are drawn from the fossil record of the Carboniferous era and represent some of the species of plants that laid down these fossil fuel reserves up to 350 million years ago. Many of their close relatives are still living amongst us today.















JAHANZEB HAROON

Born in 1990 in Karachi (Pakistan)
Lives and works in Pakistan

BIOGRAPHY

Jahanzeb Haroon a visual artist based in Lahore. Haroon studied fine art at the National College of Arts, Lahore, from 2013 to 2018, where he was a painting major. He has exhibited at the Young Artist Exhibition, Alhamra, Lahore, and contributed to ArtNow as a photographer and writer. In January 2017, Haroon was selected to spend a term in Siena, Italy, for The Siena Art Institute's Study Abroad Program.

CONCEPT

The first thing that strikes you as you enter the premises of the Pioneer factory is the scale, then the splendor of the machines. As you settle into the scale of the place, the complexity of the processes involved to make cement, the noise that accompanies it and the manpower to keep it all functioning take time to get settled, to digest. For something so seemingly simple as cement. It's the simplicity of the product that I had in mind, its de-saturated character and organic nature when documenting the images. These silent images are juxtaposed with a few of the factory, it's intertwining and overlapping structure – to hint at the intricacies and the noise involved in making the product.











HUMA MULJI

Born in 1970 in Karachi (Pakistan)
Lives and works in Bristol (UK)

BIOGRAPHY

Huma Mulji works with sculpture, photography, drawing, and painting, creating deliberately awkward works that are spatially evocative and imbue an anti-heroism, that often plays out ironically in the work. Her participation in recent exhibitions includes, *We look at Animals Because*, Critical Distance, Toronto, Canada 2018, *Witness*, Karachi Biennale 2017, *A country of Last Things* (solo), Koel Gallery, Karachi, 2016, *The Great Game*, Irani Pavillion, Venice Biennale, 2015, *Burning Down the House*, 10th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea, 2014, *Extra|Ordinary*, Dubai, 2013, *Twilight*, (solo) show at Project 88, Mumbai, India, 2011, *""The Rising Tide""*, Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi, 2010, *""Where three Dreams Cross""*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK, 2010, *""Crystal Palace and Other Follies""* (solo), Rohtas Gallery Lahore, 2010. Mulji holds a studio at Spike Island, Bristol, United Kingdom, where she currently lives. She is Lecturer BA (Hons) Fine Art at Plymouth College of Art.

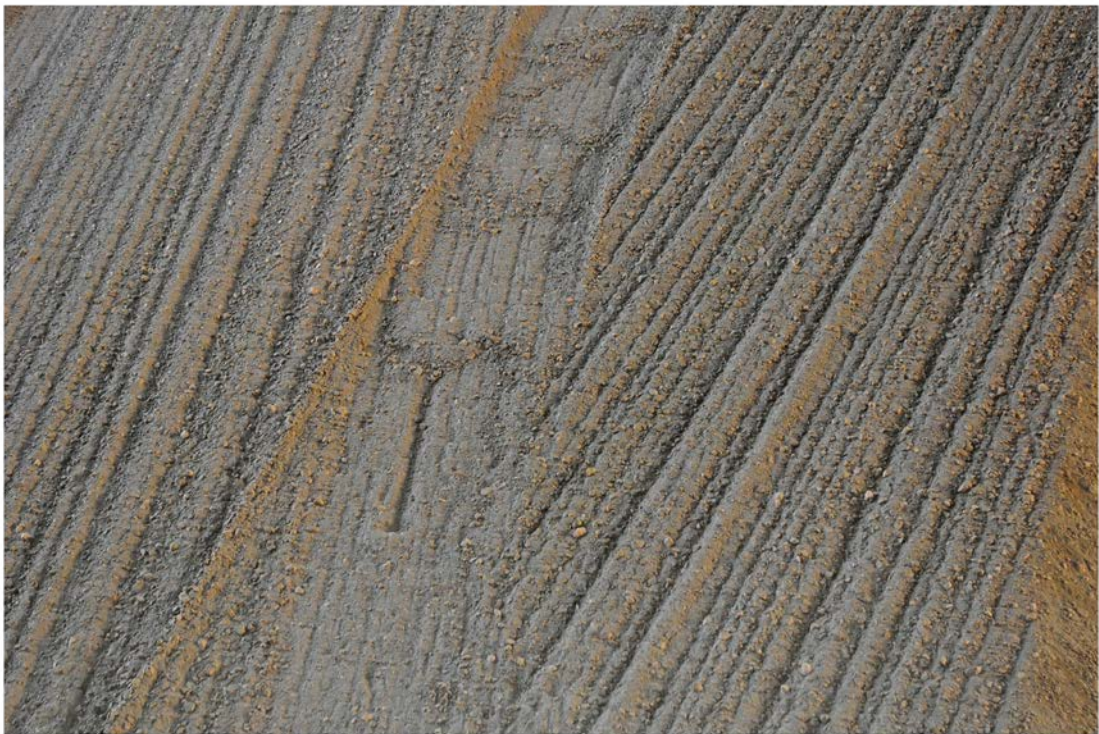
CONCEPT

The landscape is somewhat of an abstraction in a city of millions; the complexity of its existence, interruption, and demolition, always in dialogue with place, rarely experienced independently of its occupiers. This encounter with a landscape fragile against a utopia: dusted in a ubiquitous gray, brought the camouflage into particularly sharp focus.



















SEEMA NUSRAT

Born in 1980 in Karachi (Pakistan)
Lives and works in Karachi Pakistan

BIOGRAPHY

Seema Nusrat is a visual artist based in Karachi, Pakistan. Having obtained a BFA from the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in 2002, she went on to pursue a Masters in Fine and Media Arts from Nova Scotia College of Art & Design in Halifax, Canada. Seema's work transpires from the energy found in the urban metropolis and her sculptures, drawings and collages indicate her capacity to understand the most unusual materials, which are incorporated in her oeuvre. Seema has exhibited her work within Pakistan and internationally, establishing herself as a young contemporary artist with the added experience of teaching since 2010 at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture.

CONCEPT

With the rise in security concerns barricades, sandbags, watchtowers and other security fixtures have become a regular feature at all important public and private spaces. With passage of time a new kind of architecture has emerged. The erstwhile security fixtures are now an inherent part of this new architecture assimilating them into an integral feature of design instead. "The other storey" is a continued exploration of analyzing this new architecture which tries to assimilate local design aesthetic with a functional requirement out of an architectural design.















NAUSHEEN SAEED

Born in 1968 in Lahore (Pakistan)
Lives and works in Lahore Pakistan

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Lahore, working and teaching there. Nausheen Saeed is an art educator at the National College of Arts Lahore, She acquired a post graduate degree in Site Specific Sculpture from Wimbledon College of Art, London and since has been showing extensively at various important group exhibitions internationally. A number of her solo exhibitions were held at prestigious galleries across Pakistan, including Rohats 2, Lahore and Canvas Gallery, Karachi. She also organizes the "Mansion Residency" in which young artists are invited to produce works in response to location. Saeed's work is collected by various important public and private collections, including the World Bank, Levis Pakistan, National College of Arts and Toyota Tsusho Public Collection.

CONCEPT

My work has always been a dialogue between ideas, material, technique and location/context.

The sculpture for me is not merely site specific, but sight specific. It deals with how we perceive the world and how we perceived the way the world perceives us. Being at the Pioneer Residency was an occasion to reflect on one's own practice, ideas and strategies. It opened up new vistas and avenues to explore – and extend limits in which we have been happily living. Arriving at the Residency was an occasion to interact with multiple possibilities in terms of material, technique and scale. An experience that taught me to revise my ideas about art making. Being at a different place – outside of my studio, away from my home was useful to concentrate on basic and prime issues of art and art making. The possibility of working with scale, weight and space was a recurring force to generate ideas and imagery. Thus I started my first work, which consisted of a boulder suspended on a scaffolding of steel pipes. An impossible task anywhere else, but was made possible at that venue. This work, the Lightness of Being is about witnessing the omnipotence of power in its different formats and manifestations such as materials, i.e., rocks, machinery, power and man's manipulation of its possibility. There are many levels of intervention in making. From mountain, the considered giants of our planet, the force to reckon, the food for awe and inspiration, it has melted down to a bag that can raise another form of power in terms of constructions of a house, barracks, building or a high rise. When everything is exerting power, actually it defies/eliminates/diminishes the power. Lightness of being is just about the man and its surroundings. Man can control but in the process is controlled.

























OPEN HOUSE





























PRESS



BONDS OF ART

By Sana Kazi

An artists' residency in Khushab comprising seven major artists turned out to be a major moment for the development of art and architecture in the country.

Pioneer Art Residency, curated by Canvas Gallery, represented seven artists this year. The curator Sameera Raja diligently brought together a brilliant group of internationally acclaimed creative minds. These included Hamra Abbas, David Alesworth, Jahanzeb Haroon, Quddus Mirza, Huma Mulji, Seema Nusrat and Nausheen Saeed.

One can only imagine how prolific these seven artists are to have worked together for fifteen days and nights and produced this kind of work. Their experience and artwork, when shared with the public, becomes an important moment for the development of art and architecture in this country. After viewing the works and the in-process digital slide show projection, the final body of work seems unique and breath-taking. More significant was the astounding energy, time, and intellect that was shared between these artists while they were in the process of executing their artworks.

Astounding in its breadth, the work made it impossible for anyone visiting the site in Khushab to view it, stay for only a few hours and then leave. One could even spend days there and it would not be enough. The documentation of all the artists by Jahanzeb Haroon — in trying to understand the experience involving big boulders, high tech machinery, acres of wide-spread land laden in coal, cement, labour and so much more — was an incredible thing to watch.

A good example of the scale and textures in which the artists were operating is David Alesworth's site-specific drawings and later their aerial photographic documentation. The drawings were made in a bed of bituminous coal and limestone dust which was approximately 310 x 250 ft.

The motifs were the fossil record of the Carboniferous era and represented some of the species of plants that laid down these fossil fuel reserves up to 350 million years ago. Each site-specific drawing was photographed at 4:30 pm every day for 15 days. The actual work on-site seemed like huge velvet monotone carpets with floral impressions.

Monotones and monochromatic grey was further explored by Huma Mulji. One could only wish that her on-site large scale creations could be preserved for life. However, we only saw the prints of her work. These prints were awe-inspiring and sensitive, even reminiscent of the Spanish legend Antonio Tapies. The use of red, as she explains, is because the colour emerges only when enough time is spent with the gray, creating many connotations on various intellectually stimulating levels. Mulji worked on a very large scale, but when photographed one could only see the intricacies of the bigger image. One could understand what she meant when she explained, ""walking around the plant slowly took away the big things and revealed the small things.""

Where Mulji focused on the softer and fragile quality in grains of sand and cement, Nausheen Saeed made use of limestone and steel itself. Saeed brought the heaviness and sturdiness of the boulders, stones and rocks, all manipulated at the hands of technology. She played with opposites: "lightness" and "weight", and with great dexterity. Almost like a mathematician, she has the ability to calculate the weight, size and proportion of the various materials and technology available to her to create this concrete, magnificent web-like structure of steel, placing an object inside it which seemed like a cloud from afar but really was a heavy stone crushed to dust. Saeed's intelligence and grip on content and material was outstanding, especially with this towering sculpture, titled 'Lightness of being'.

Another towering accomplishment was Seema Nusrat's watchtower that stood within the factory

compound, all painted in bright hues with traditional motifs. She explains the incorporation of the watchtower as an architectural element prominent nowadays, while assimilating a local design aesthetic within it. A watchtower, usually uninviting and unappealing, looked like a joyful and happy place, tempting many to go inside and have a look, and maybe sit in it a while. To sit somewhere happy with your loved ones, amidst a garden with fountains, seems like a scene from bygone days.

Hamra Abbas created that very intense nostalgia for all those who have seen the 17th century famous fountain located at the Shalimar Gardens. Abbas made an exact replica of a section from that fountain titled, "Waterfall 2," with an entirely new combination of stones that are quarried in Khushab. She had designed motifs like small hills in zig zag formations, with wonderful earthy tones of stones. Their layout area seemed like a map designed on Abbas's artwork, delighting and inspiring all those who stood in Khushab's hilly landscape.



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