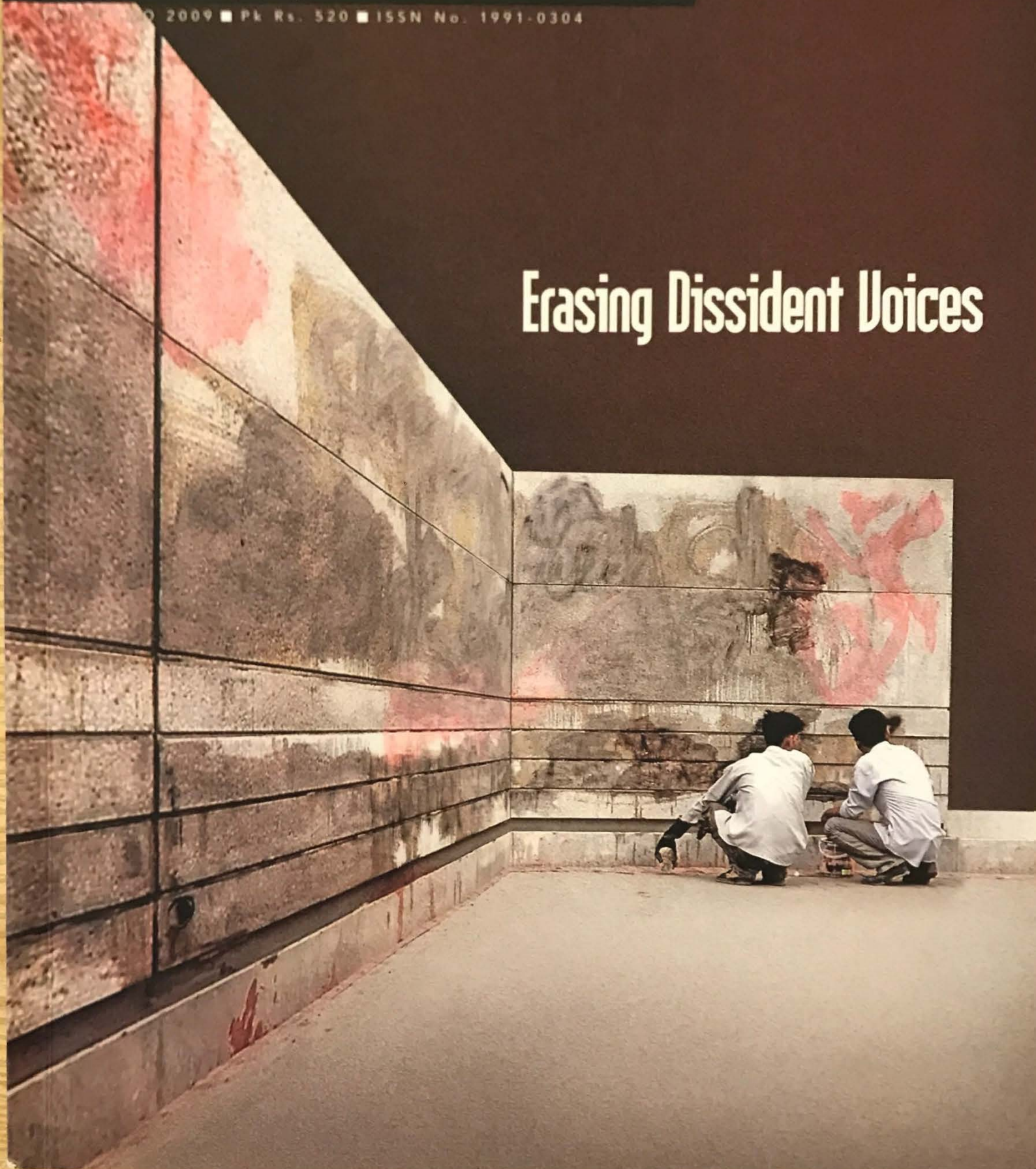


NUKTA ART

Biannual ■ Contemporary Art Magazine of Pakistan

2009 ■ Pk Rs. 520 ■ ISSN No. 1991-0304

Erasing Dissident Voices



The way a work of art sparked a violent controversy and threatened the Shanakht Festival in Karachi has added yet another chapter to the heated debate on censorship, which Pakistani artists felt they had closed with the dark years of the Zia dictatorship.

The erasure of dissident voices is a part of universal politics of power and control and has a long history of coercing creative communities into silence. Resilient artists and writers sensitive to the aspirations of the people resist this pressure with subversive strategies.

In this issue *NuktaArt* focuses on how this cultural and social minefield is negotiated by visual artists. Zohra Yusuf and Atteqa Ali examine the intrinsic links between art, people and politics in Pakistan. Beena Sarwar has contributed a well researched article on the factors behind the much publicized self-exile of renowned Indian artist M.F. Hussain.

International commentaries on censorship by writers from Italy, Holland, South America, China and Iran point to how controlling dogmas are sometimes exploited to curb and mutate artistic expressions.

A comprehensive essay on the 53rd Venice Biennale discusses the mega art event and the consciousness brought about by its theme 'Making Worlds'. It also discusses that if the Western world is serious about Making Worlds (that everyone can take ownership of), then there is a need for the concept to evolve into a movement which can be taken up in future sequels to this show. Curators living in different parts of the world, particularly non-western, can be invited to add authentic voices of the often subordinated cultures in a practical step towards the de-territorialization of culture.

Moeen Faruqi represents the collector community. A prolific and provocative artist himself, he pro-actively collects the work of his peers and his home 'gives one a sense of being in an artist's studio, where there is almost always another artist visiting.'

The book selected for review in this issue deals with the fault lines along which the post 9/11 world is divided.

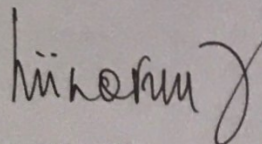
NuktaArt acknowledges the efforts of the following who, with their heroic efforts, created a space for social critique:

Tehrik-e-Niswan—which, according to Shazia Zuberi who traces three decades of the history of this organization—occupies 'a unique positionality within two spheres; performing arts and activism.' Its contribution, which runs parallel to some of the darkest years for creative arts in Pakistan is also a story of courage of its founders, particularly Sheema Kermani, who has kept classical dance alive in Karachi almost single handedly.

Photographer Fahim Siddiqi, whose images selected for the Photo Essay highlight the importance of wall chalking as footnotes from a people on the margins of the megapolis.

In a conversation with Feica, the country's foremost political cartoonist, *NuktaArt* brings to its readers, the intellect and artistic talent behind the scathing caricatures.

As *NuktaArt* investigates the complex and layered relationship between influential structures of power and creative expression, it reaffirms the significance of this authentic voice of the people and the urgency to keep it free.



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