

THE LARGEST SELLING ENGLISH MONTHLY MAGAZINE

SHE

MARCH 1999

Style

Who has it?

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Women's Rights:

Are Men Still Pulling the Strings?

Celebrate Eid

New fashion ultimates by top designers

Angie's dynamic look of the season

Delectable Strawberry Desserts



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Nadya Mistry



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COVER

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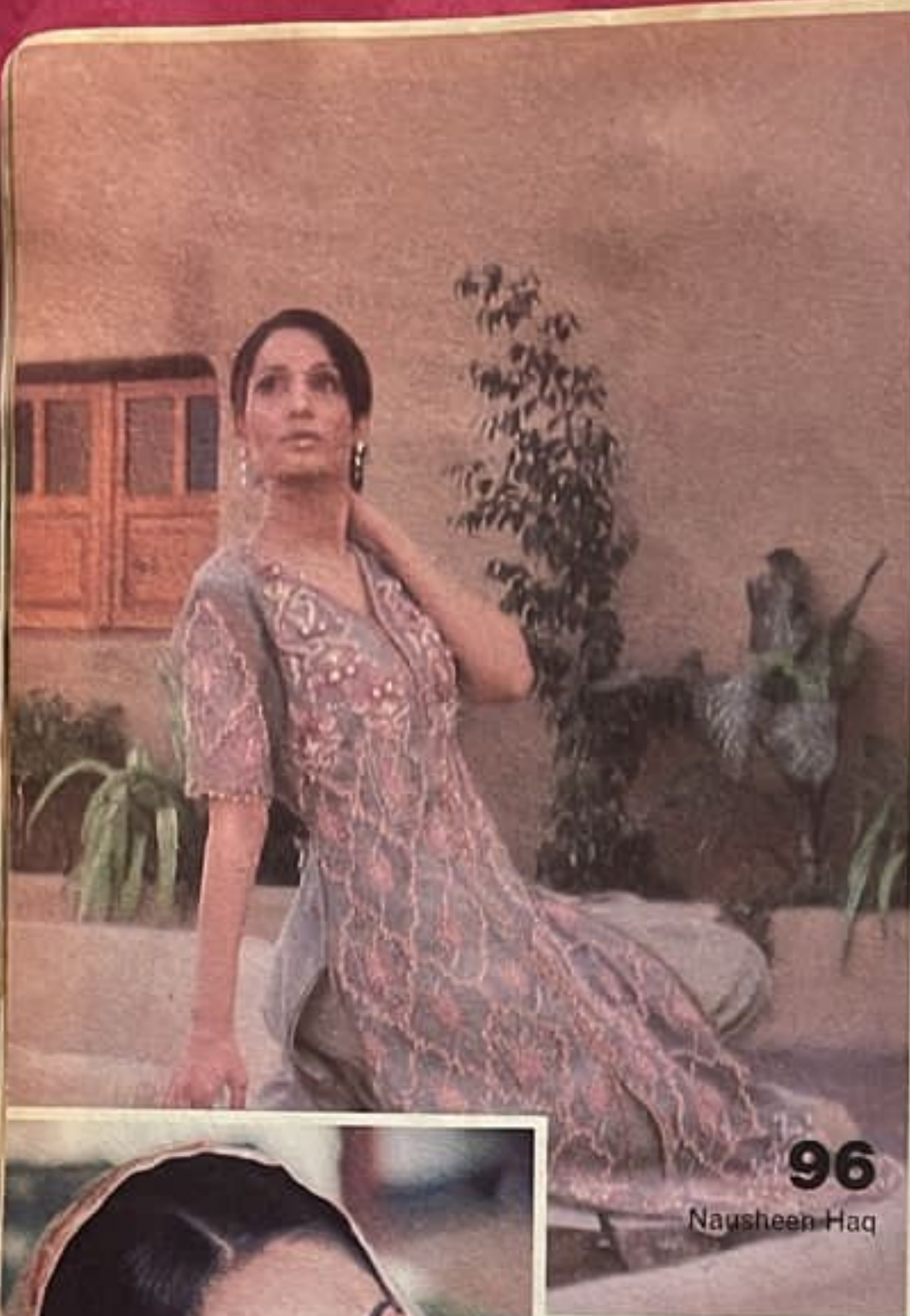
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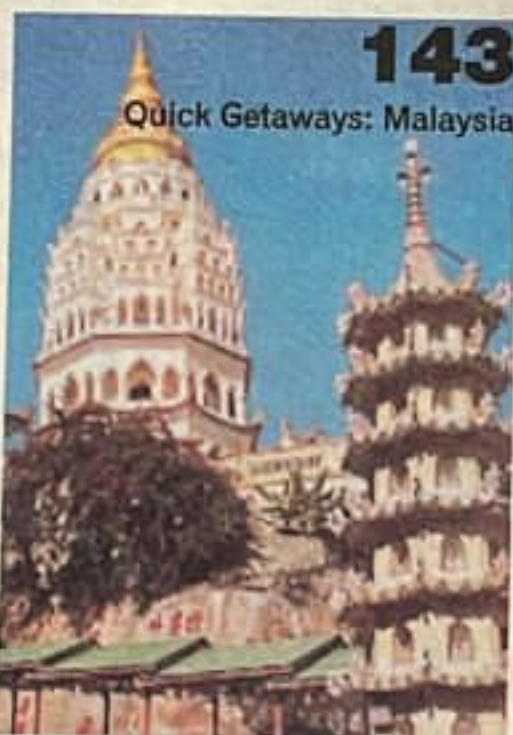
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Women and Violence

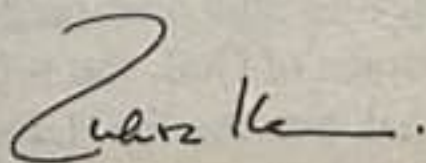
A recent victim of domestic violence, a young woman and a mother, recounts the tale of her treatment at the hands of a brutal husband: On December 21, 1998, her husband chopped off her nose and an ear, and damaged her eyes permanently by piecing them with a sharp instrument. Today she pleads for justice and an appropriate punishment for her husband, who is free to perpetuate such cruelty whenever he so pleases.

A maidservant is interred in a police station on the complaint of her employer for suspected theft. She is kept there for six days, regularly beaten, her arm twisted and tied to a wooden stool or to an iron grill. Other women tell of sexual abuse and gang rape in custody, which is widely acknowledged as being common and of regular practice.

Seminars and workshops are being held all over the country to mark the final International Women's Day of this century. Fittingly, the theme of this year was violence against women with the UN calling for an immediate legal and institutional framework to be provided in all countries for recognizing and condemning gender based violence and for perpetrators to be punished.

The State of Human Rights 1998, recently released by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, in its chapter on Women, highlights the increased incidence of violence on women in Pakistan. A sample survey showed that 82 percent of women in rural Punjab feared violence, and in developed urban areas, 52 percent admitted to being beaten by their husbands. Death by burning was a frequently occurring form of violence; over 35 percent of rape victims were minors, well over half of them being gang raped. Custodial violence, in particular the sexual abuse and rape of women in police stations, was common.

Will this Government listen to the plea of Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, who is calling for legal steps to be taken to protect women from violence and to ensure that the perpetrators are punished? A faint light on the horizon may be glimpsed in the resolution passed by the Senate on International Women's Day, calling for the protection of political, cultural, legal and economic rights of women.



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Starting the Art Season

Karachi galleries are often visited by foreign artists, sometimes more than once. In recent years there have been exhibitions by Chinese artists, Australians, Sri Lankans, artists from Nepal, and from Bangladesh. Beginning the season in February, more than one gallery entertained artists from abroad. A veteran artist from Sri Lanka, sculptor-painter Tilake Abeysinghe exhibited a collection of his work in both these disciplines at the Kunj Gallery. Fatemeh Vafaei Nejad, who came from Iran to Karachi via Islamabad, showed her work at Chawkandi, and Ubaid Syed, whose art education encompassed the Karachi School of Art and the Folkuniversitet, Stockholm, Sweden, exhibited paintings at the V.M. Gallery.

Tilake, who was discovered by the owner of the Kunj Gallery when she saw his work in Colombo, was a student of Marino Marini in the '60s, when he was awarded a scholarship to the Academie di Belle Arte de Brera in Milan. Between 1960 and 1984, the artist travelled constantly. He has shown his works in numerous countries and was presented with the Chevalier award by the Italian government in 1984. In Sri Lanka, Tilake is well known and much honoured. His monumental sculptures stand in many prominent locations in Colombo. Unable to transport large artworks, the artist created a series of small, dancing figures. Carried in the rough, plaster casing, the artist cast them in bronze for the Kunj display.

Fatemeh, who has held three exhibitions of her work in Islamabad, graduated from the Art College, Tehran with a thesis on the ancient artists and culture of Persia. Her paintings in exhibition varied in size but were linked thematically. Large spaces were juxtaposed with myriad, tiny designs, often resembling embroidery stitches or patchwork. Living in a post-modern era, Fatemeh explores a rich history of tradition in her quest to confirm the values of the past.

Ubaid Syed is a colourful, splashy

painter, inspired by the mountain areas of Abisco, the northern regions of Sweden that are close to Norway. Painting in the open air, his rapid strokes aspire to capture the colours of autumn, silver streams, red streaked skies, and night blue sea. Reviewed in a Stockholm newspaper, Ubaid was praised for his eastern view of the Scandinavian landscape.

The Momart Gallery displayed the paintings of veteran Nasir Shamsi, who exhibited the fruits of five years' work. His signature style for many years has contained the circle, with numerous connotations, and the pale, pastel shades that pleased his aesthetic taste. Surprisingly, his latest collection contains several almost impressionist landscapes. There are dark colours balancing the pale oils, and trees, ranging from impressionist to abstract. Shamsi's landscapes are pristine in appearance. Oils applied in distilled layers often create a mirage-like scenario where no human treads.

The Clifton Art Gallery created something of a sensation with a group show that included some of the country's most distinguished artists, living and dead. Works by Ahmed Parvez, Hanjra, Shemza, Laila Shahzada and Sadequain were displayed alongside Jamil Naqsh, early paintings by Najmi Sura, an interior view by Mussarat Mirza, the early abstracts of Lubna Latif, and more recent, Nahid Raza, Riffat Alvi, Qudsia, Meher Afroz, and works by Souza and M.F. Hussain as well as other well known names. While many sought the two small, early paintings by Anwar Jalal Shemza, they remain in the collection of the Clifton Gallery.

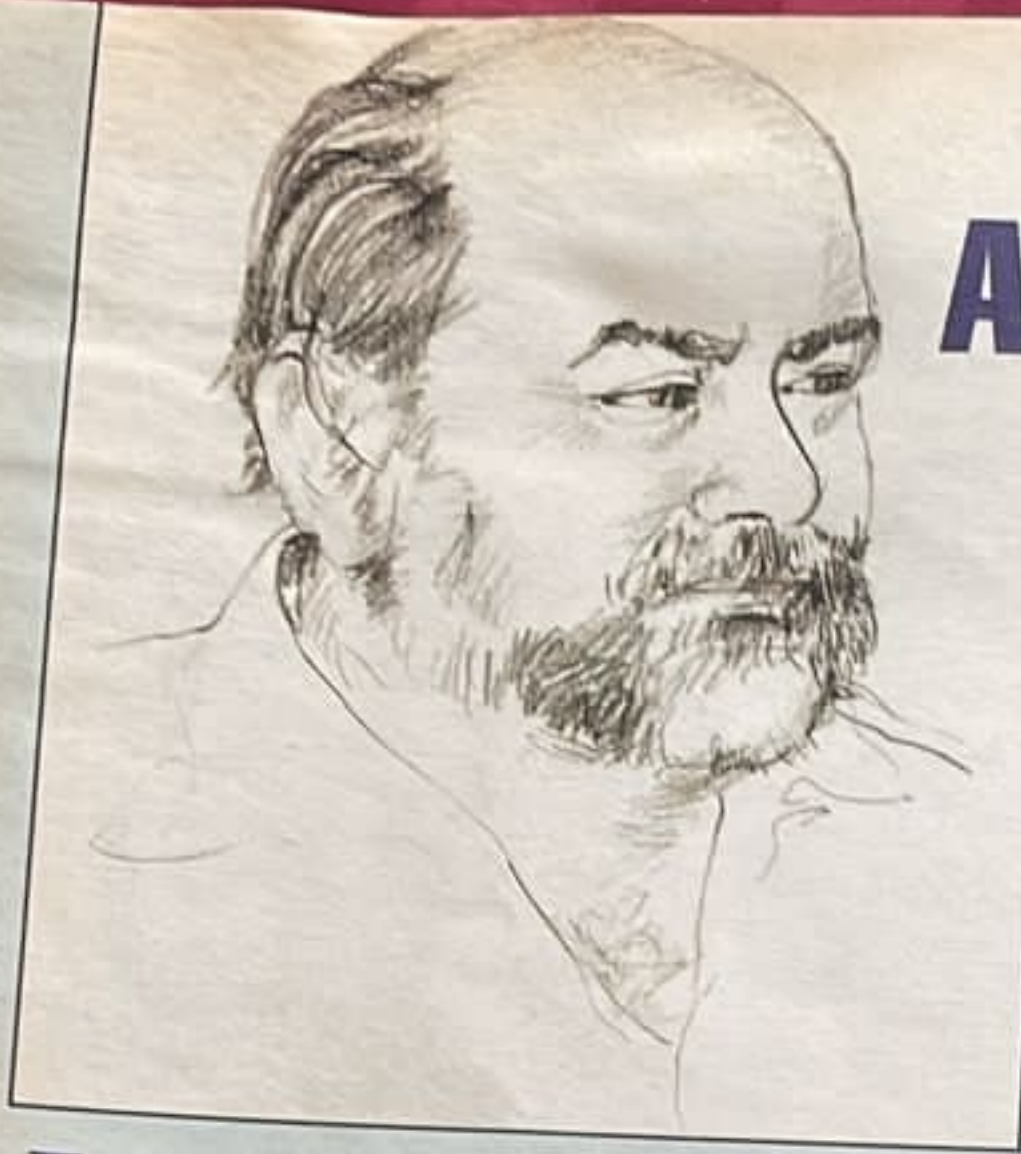
Meerza Ali's new gallery in Clifton opened with a colourful collection of works by Maqsood Ali, the artist who was celebrated for the Bitshah series in the '70s as he prepares to welcome the new millennium with a series of large, brightly coloured flowers.



From top: Paintings by Sadequain, Fatemeh Vafaei Nejad and Souza

MARJORIE HUSAIN

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A Sad Farewell

display, and the seeds of a relationship were sown.

His early years were rich with honours, scholarships and awards. From 1966 to 1969, Zahoor studied at the Hornsey College of Art, and the Royal College of Art, London.



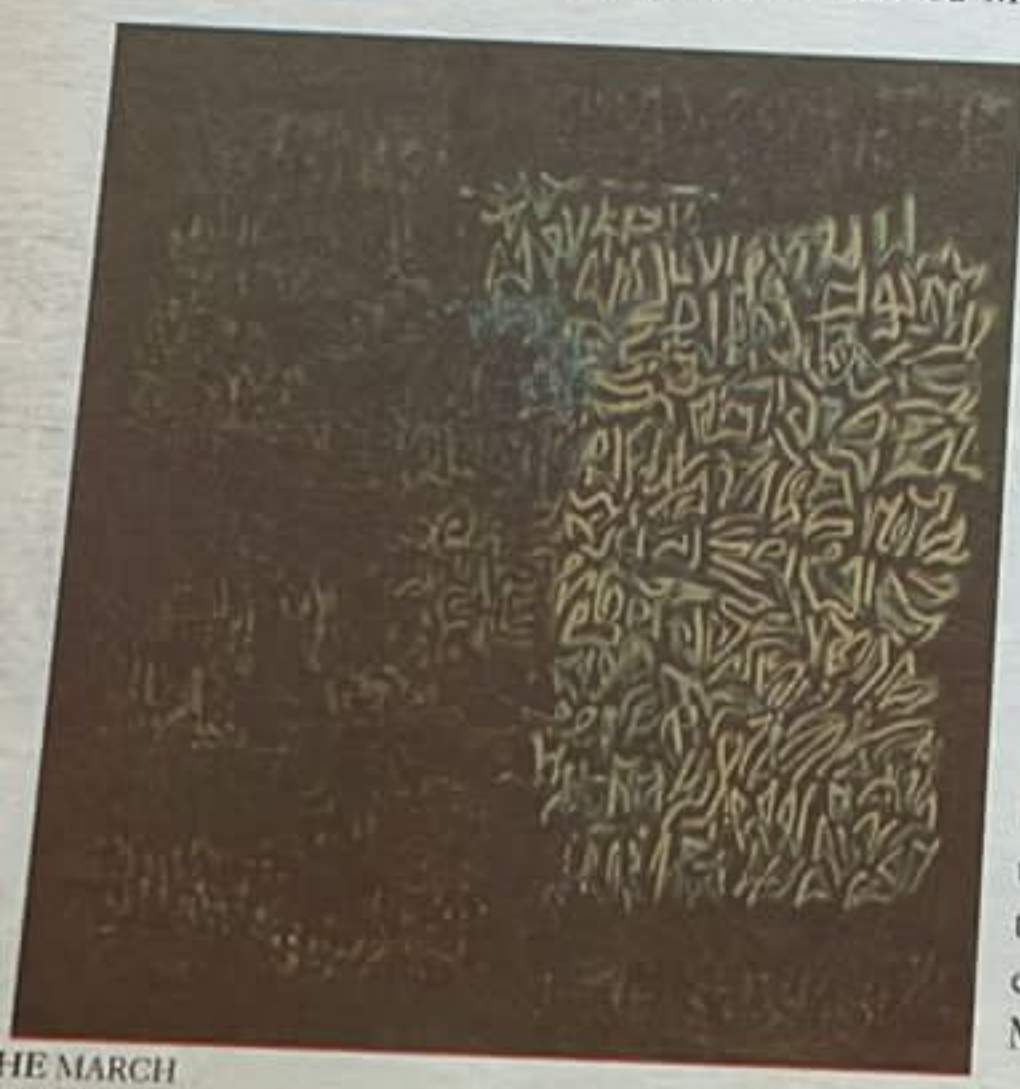
In Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, artists, friends and admirers of the late Zahoorul Akhlaq gathered to condole the death of the distinguished artist and his talented daughter, Jahan Ara. Both were fatally shot in their Upper Mall home in Lahore by a sociopathic killer.

Zahoor was regarded with great esteem and affection by his early mentor, Professor Shakir Ali, whom he met in Karachi in 1954. A teenager then, he attended a group exhibition at the Frere Hall, looking for answers about modern art. He found them in the shape of Shakir Ali, also present at the

There he was drawn towards the fabulous collection of Moghul miniature paintings in the collection of the British Museum. For ever after, references to these works emerged in his paintings.

In 1983, he represented Pakistan in an exhibition, Hommage Aux Prix Nobel, in Sweden, in which countries with Nobel Peace Prize winning citizens took part. The collection of etchings Zahoor exhibited depicted mankind threatened by a nuclear holocaust. In '87, the artist went to Yale University on a Fulbright scholarship, and worked at the Institute of Sacred Music, Religion and Art. He retired from the NCA in '94, and taught in prestigious foreign art institutes, always returning to Pakistan and the links with his roots.

Zahoor leaves an aesthetic vacuum that cannot be filled. His education, experience and great talent equipped him to recognize and confront post-modern concerns as no other artist of his era. Learned as he undoubtedly was, Zahoor was an unassuming, kind man, the last person one would expect to die violently. May he rest in peace. ♦



Clockwise from top: Wife Sherazade Alam; Sunless days; Exploring roots