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SHE

JANUARY 1998 PRICE Rs. 75

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- Iram Ansari, a promising interior designer, gives her tips on how to rejuvenate your living space.

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NEW YEAR GLOOM

Rarely has a new year begun with so little cheer and so much apprehension for the future of democracy, liberalism, the rights of women and minorities. Enough has been written and said of the series of unending crises that we have been faced with over the past few months, and the despair this has caused among all stratas of society. But nothing vexes as strong as the fears we now experience over the choice of a misogynist, know for his anti-minority stance too, as the new President. These fears are further compounded by the imminence of a package of constitutional reforms, which pose an ominous threat to our existing, rather pleasant, lifestyle of moderate Islam. Why the people have not been taken into confidence on the substance of this proposed package is in itself mind blowing and a further cause for alarm bells to be clanging loud and clear. As if coping with rapidly rising inflation and increasing incidences of dacoity and theft were not problems enough to plague us ordinary people, we now have the added blight of growing sectarian strife and murder to contend with. The horror and shame of the incident last week where innocent men, women and children were gunned down in a graveyard in Lahore, has stunned the nation into a state of shocked disbelief.

Far-fetched it may not entirely be, but perhaps we can take some solace from the fact that

"Whom God wishes to destroy, he first makes mad"— *Europides*

Which is a cheerful, if slightly sordid way, of looking at the fate in store for the current crop of leaders in our country.

On which bright prospect, our very best wishes for a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Zuhra Karim

NEW YEAR GLOOM

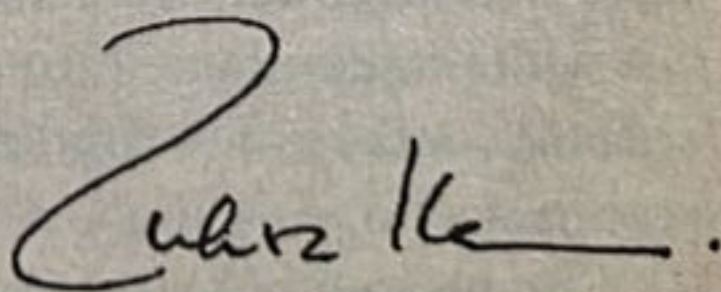
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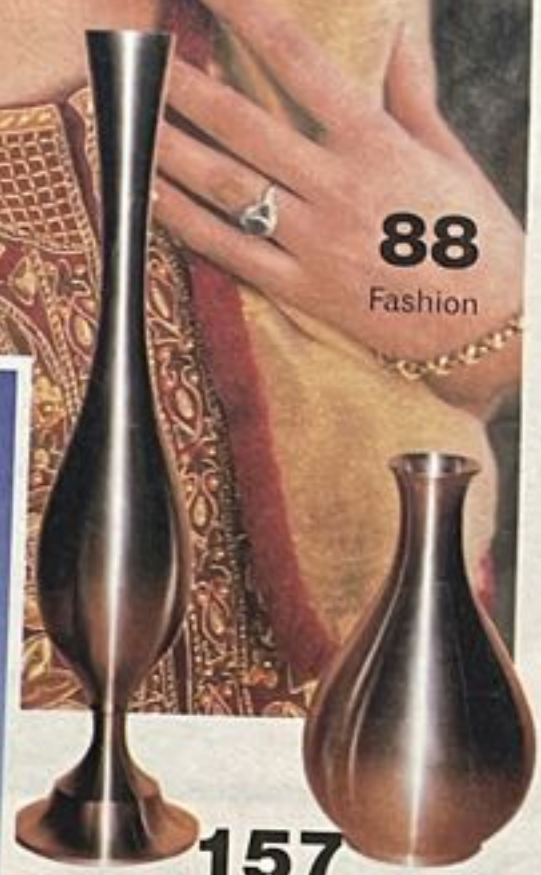
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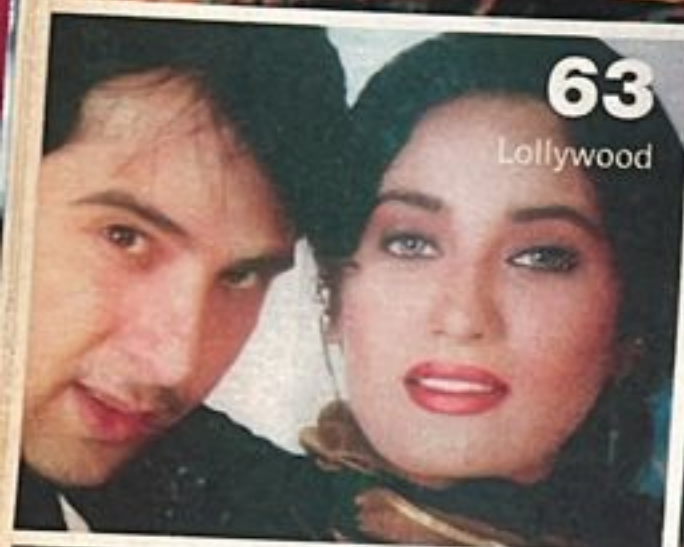
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Pomme Amina Gohar
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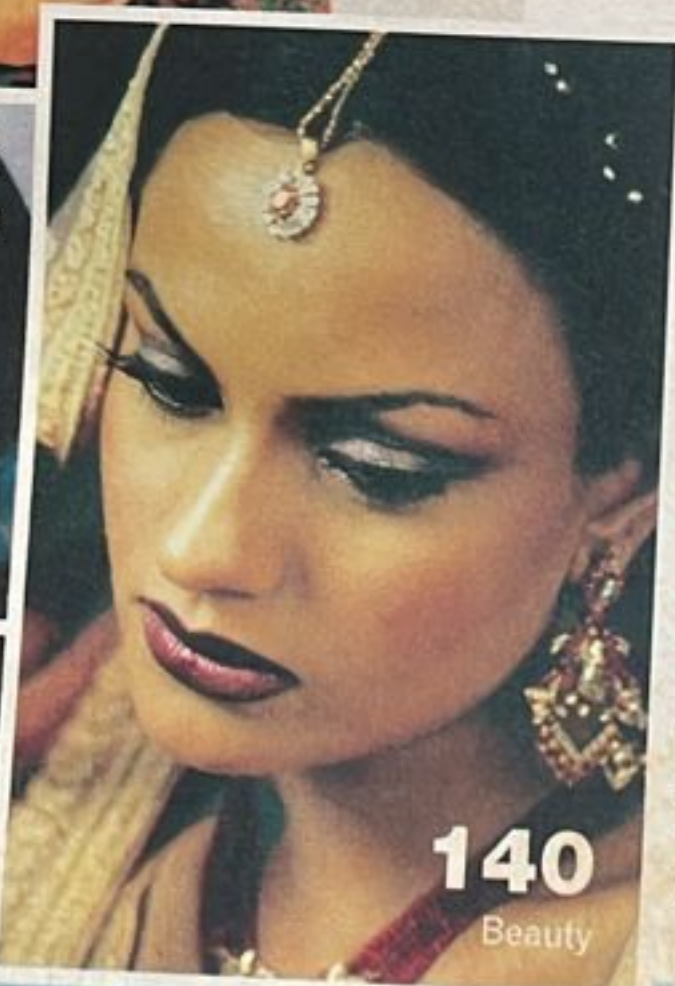
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The Colours of DECEMBER

A group exhibition of miniature paintings at the Chawkandi Art, an exhibition of paintings by Mashkoor Raza at the Momart Gallery, Iqbal Durrani's work at the Clifton Art Gallery, Maqsood Ali showing a new collection at Mujmua... These were some of the art events that preceded the month of Ramzan.

At the Arts Council, paintings from Karachi, dispatched for a country wide exhibition in Lahore commemorating the golden jubilee, were shown by the Karachi Fine Arts Association (KFAA) who collected the Karachi contributions. In their customary style, the KFAA began by presenting gold bordered crystal bowls to veteran artists Sardar and Nagi. The Association members tend to follow a realistic style of art, contrasting with non members such as Nahid Raza, Qudsia Nisar, Wahab Jaffer, Bashir Mirza and Gulgee. Superbly painted pieces by Nagori, Abdul Hai and Ali Imam ensured an unusual mix of aesthetic viewpoints.

Natasha Shoro exhibited a collection of abstract works at her studio, while arguably the most striking event of the month was Tapu Javeri's merger of paint and photography exhibited at the Indus Gallery.

Using the theme *Chand Aur Chakor* as the subject of his paintings, Maqsood Ali addressed the hopeless longings fuelled by romantic inspiration using the legend of the bird who loved the moon as a point of departure. For three decades, the artist has explored the rich culture and legends of Sindh, metamorphosing his research into painted images. A signature image is the 'square' symbolizing the patchwork and embroidery that is synonymous with the region. Using a disciplined palette and diverse variations of the square as an element of design, Maqsood has produced his best

collection in recent times.

Mashkoor Raza's paintings were less colourful than of late. Seemingly influenced by Jamil Naqsh, the artist juxtaposes women and horses, or uses the subtly tinted figure as focus for an abstract background. The movement of running horses was apparent in several works but muted. In place of the previously used primary colour, Mashkoor experiments with the phenomenon of black and white and the myriad shades in between.

At the Clifton Art Gallery, a large painting covered an entire wall. Textured, earth coloured tones encompassed a seated figure draped with birds, and holding a flower. Dividing the canvas into segments and changing the pigments, lines ran vertical and horizontal. Iqbal Durrani is a painter with potential as yet untapped.

His pigeon formula is highly successful and his popularity in the market results in the continuation of a theme that seldom varies. At the Indus Gallery, Tapu



Clockwise from top: A painting by Iqbal Durrani; Miniature by Talha Rathore (right) & A painting by Mashkoor Raza (left); Miniature by Sumaira Tazeen; A painting by Maqsood Ali

MARJORIE HUSAIN

SHE JANUARY

Javeri in his first solo exhibition combined multiple images, negatives scratched, cut and tampered with chemicals, assimilated into painted areas. Primarily interested in people, many portraits are inducted. Contemporary in style and approach, the artist's subjects are classic. Themes inspired by Greek art, icons and classic sculpture, the struggle for virtue in a flawed world and the importance of mystic beliefs in the corporeal world.

Several of the miniature painters shown at Chawkandi Art were known in Karachi from previous displays. Fasiullah Ahsan, Nusra Latif Qureshi, Imran Qureshi, Talha Rathore, Aisha Khalid, Sumaira Tazeen and Amina Ali are all graduates of NCA confirming the resurgence of the classic art emerging from the college in recent times. Encouraged by Bashir Ahmed, an innovative miniaturist in his own right, the art of the miniature has entered the 20th century.

Natasha Shoro — Riding the waves

Dynamic colouration blending the geometric ethos of Islamic Art with the freedom of Modern Expressionism, merges two diverse cultures. The expression of an artist synthesizing experiences of a life lived in contrasting cultural surroundings. Experimenting with form, technique, colour and texture, Natasha Shoro's work appears as lyrical and fluid as water. Swathes of rich colour sweep the artist's surfaces, her eastern roots emerging in areas of

in 1993 and sold 45 out of 50 paintings in a three-day display.

Since then her work has been seen in several group displays in Pakistan including the 7th Visual Art Display in Islamabad in '96. Natasha's recent solo exhibition, a display of approximately fifty pieces, was displayed at her KDA Studio, a collection that included abstract acrylic works, bold colour field worked on canvas. Skillfully shaded and textured, dramatically contrasting colours were stunning in their visual impact. Other paintings, multi-layered, are worked with mixed media, collages that combine, acrylic, oil pastels, coloured pencils and graphite.

Echoing the form and shades of folk art designs, there are borders which consist of traditional motifs inter-relating one to another. The artist's work is enhanced by patterns which contain the abstract shapes. They vary in density from heavily applied opaque to transparent colour washes. Some pieces were etched with a

drypoint, glyphs that simulate the traditional art of ethnic needlework.

Spontaneous in effect, Natasha's paintings are worked in several stages. Lying the canvas flat she first primes the surface, allowing it to dry before applying paint. Sometimes she controls the paint working from the centre of the canvas to the sides, at other times the paint is poured onto the wet canvas creating a rhythmic flow. Often colours merge soft edged, one into another.

Natasha spoke of the difficulties young, unknown artists face while struggling to establish their credentials on the local art scene. Returning to Pakistan as an award winning Honours graduate, whose work had been shown in the States, Natasha approached local galleries for an exhibition. The response was cool so she arranged her own first solo exhibition at the PACC and sold 46 out of 50 painting in a three-day display. The recent exhibition in her own studio was equally successful although galleries are now eager to show her work. She is equally critical of the PNCA who, she feels, have done very little relevant work to commemorate 50 years of Pakistan. Indeed, she adds, the painting she contributed to the 1996 National Visual Arts Exhibition in Islamabad was never returned. Inquiries led to the conclusion that the painting is 'lost'. She smiles and shrugs her shoulders, a feisty young lady who knows her worth.

Abstract acrylic on canvas



patterned borders of ethnic design.

Natasha took a B.F.A. in Graphic Design with an emphasis

on drawing, painting and ceramics, from the Iowa State University, USA in '91. The experience taught her to be motivated and assertive, confident in her own ability. As a student she was required to participate in an art event encompassing 20 universities from which 500 pieces were shortlisted. Out of these, 150 were exhibited, four works receiving 'Best in Show' awards. Natasha's work was amongst the four. She participated in several group shows in the States, but on her return to Pakistan, the young artist was initially unable to interest a local gallery in an 'unknown' painter.

Unfazed, she arranged her own exhibition at the PACC

Moenjodaro - Acrylic on paper

