

Editorial

Greetings colleagues and friends! Once again Vasl is extending its activities around Pakistan, with the International Residency successfully taking place in Islamabad in collaboration with Rohtas Gallery this spring, and with Vasl's support of the ARTEd Outreach Workshop in Chitral and SLICE, Lahore. The ARTEd workshop, run by Nadia Hussain, Aleem Dad Khan and Mehrbano Khattak will build awareness and an understanding of art for young people of Pakistan's remote mountain regions, and SLICE – run by Fatima Hussain of Other Asia and Simon Daw and Paul Burgess from Scale, UK – is an international project that will conceive and present twenty new artworks.

Last quarter's newsletter featured the first ever artist in focus, Adeel Uz Zafar. After the sudden and tragic death of our dear friend and colleague Usman Ghauri, Vasl has decided to pay a tribute to this work by transcribing sections of an interview he undertook shortly before his death. We hope to honour Usman by turning attention to his work, and his committed practice as a contemporary artist.

The 'Arab Spring' turns into a tenuous summer, with increasing violence in Libya and revolutionary tensions continuing in Yemen, Bahrain and Syria, along with an increase of violence in Egypt after the overthrow of Mubarak. In Pakistan the killing of Osama Bin Laden north of Islamabad and a jump of violence in our cities is unsettling and worrying.

Yet with this considered, and even as the summer puts the art world to sleep and as many galleries close their programmes for the hottest months, it is clear that projects and activities in the arts of Pakistan will continue to gather in speed and ambition. This year Vasl celebrates its ten-year anniversary and even after the events of 9/11, (which fell shortly after our first international workshop in Gadar) the Vasl working group remained determined to continue programming. So while Vasl's activities will also slow down over the summer months, do keep an eye on our website and mailing list for news and events that may creep into the (temporarily quietened) calendar. Given the summer slow-down and closure of so many galleries over these months, the calendar has been omitted from the newsletter this time. We've replaced this section with a collection of online resources that we like, and that can occupy you in these hot and quiet months.

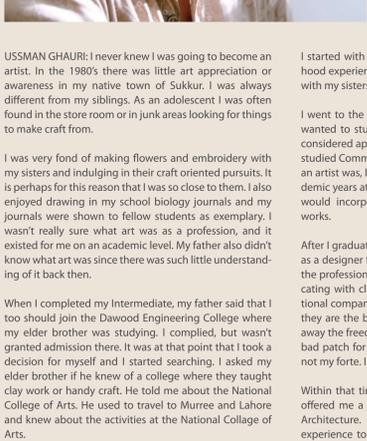
Warmest always, Adeela Suleman, Hassan Mustafa, Owais Khan, Gemma Sharpe, Madiha Sikander, Sammer Sultan, Fahim Rao, Haider Ali Jan and Javed Petras.

Please send your news and feedback to: vaslnewsletter@gmail.com



Usman Ghauri, 2006

Featured Artist: Ussman Ghauri (1969-2011)



USSMAN GHAURI: I never knew I was going to become an artist. In the 1980s there was little art appreciation or awareness in my native town of Sukkur. I was always different from my siblings. As an adolescent I was often found in the store room or in junk areas looking for things to make craft from.

I was very fond of making flowers and embroidery with my sisters and indulging in their craft-oriented pursuits. It is perhaps for this reason that I was so close to them. I also enjoyed drawing in my school biology journals and my journals were shown to fellow students as exemplary. I wasn't really sure what art was as a profession, and it existed for me on an academic level. My father also didn't know what art was since there was such little understanding of it back then.

When I completed my Intermediate, my father said that I should join the Dawood Engineering College where my elder brother was studying. I complied, but wasn't granted admission there. It was at that point that I took a decision for myself and I started searching. I asked my elder brother if he knew of a college where they taught clay work or hand-craft. He told me about the National College of Arts. He used to travel to Murree and Lahore and knew about the activities at the National College of Arts.

The college conducted an aptitude test. It was quite competitive and of 700 applicants only 28 were chosen. This was a challenge to get the admission. I think I got the admission because of the modest skills I had, but I believe it was largely because of my passion. I had little knowledge and experience, but I feel that when you have the passion to do something your seniors tend to recognise it. Perhaps that is why we have interviews, so they can assess the passion of the student.

I started with the textile reference because of my childhood experiences with household craft-oriented activities with my sister.

I went to the National College of Arts in 1987. Initially I wanted to study Textile Design, but because it was not considered appropriate for boys at that time, I eventually studied Communication Design. Since I had no idea what an artist was, I never considered fine arts. During my academic years at NCA my work was very different because I would incorporate craft and other mediums into my works.

After I graduated my family moved to Karachi. I practiced as a designer for four or five years but I felt that it wasn't the profession for me. Working in this city and communicating with clients seemed like a hassle. When multinational companies are paying for the design they feel that they are the best judges of the design and tend to take away the freedom of the designer. Professionally, it was a bad patch for me as a designer and I sensed that it was not my forte. I wasn't clear about what I was doing.

When that time I got a call from Romla Karim, who offered me a job at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. They needed someone with designing experience to teach illustration. I grasped the opportunity. I was twenty-six years of age at that time. I was asked if I would be able to teach the students considering the little age difference between us, but I was very confident because I believed in sharing my knowledge and experiences with others.

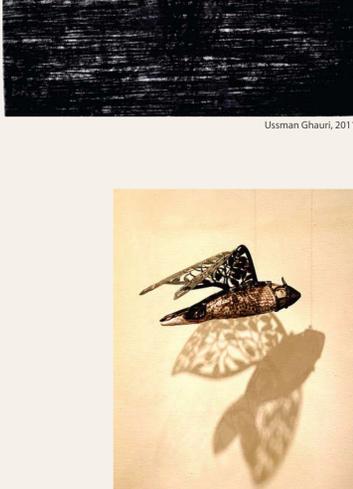
My first impression of the IVS was that it was the right place for me to stay long hours, work and breathe! I taught the students illustration, drawing and I introduced printmaking to the design students. I introduced it because I had experienced printmaking as a minor at NCA.

I felt that it was of immense relevance to the design courses that are taught to the Communication Design students. It was from there that I began my printmaking practice as an artist rather than as a designer. I felt quite relaxed and I enjoyed my work all the time. Since 1996 it has been my ritual to be at Indus at 8:30 on the dot. I stay late, work and enjoy myself. IVS is like my first home because this is where I began my career as an artist. I own this place. I love this place. This is me. IVS is Ussman Ghauri and Ussman Ghauri is IVS.

I derive my inspiration from nature for my work. The art happening in Pakistan currently is very interesting. Artists are doing very experimental work. The scenario started changing in the 90s and institutions like IVS contributed significantly. Later the visual arts department in Karachi University was introduced and the Karachi School of Arts had been around for a while. I find young artists very fascinating. Among the senior ones Mehr Afroz, Jamil Naqsh, Anwar Saeed, Ali Kazim and Unver Shafi are some of my favourites.

My work is about all my experiences, and I really want to share. I'm a very positive person in all areas. I do feel that an artist's responsibility is to share what he or she thinks in a better way and avoid unreasonable complaining about their surroundings. As sensible and educated people we have to create interesting ways to communicate with people.

I feel that every professional is full of amazing experiences, provided you are passionate about what you are doing. It's not like artists are special people. They have to do really, really hard work. It's not like it's a fun activity. Art is not always fun or a fun activity.



Ussman Ghauri, 2011



Ussman Ghauri, 'Winged Pleasure', 2010



Ussman Ghauri, 2007

Opportunities

Apexart Franchise 2012
 Deadline: 30th June 2011
 Apexart are currently accepting 450-word submissions outlining exhibition proposals. Apexart provides funding along with the necessary guidance and administrative support to make the proposed exhibition happen. Based on the idea of creating a franchise, Apexart is once again holding a worldwide open call for proposals for group exhibitions to be presented anywhere in the world, (other than New York City).

For more information see:
<http://www.apexart.org/franchise.php>

UNESCO-Aschberg Bursaries for Artist Programme
 Deadline: ongoing
 The UNESCO-Aschberg Bursaries for Artist Programmes is announcing the 2011 call for applicants. This call is open to visual artists, creative writers and musicians between the ages of 25 to 35. The programme aims to promote the mobility of young artists through art residencies abroad, give priority to artists and art residency institutions from the global south and the participation of women in international art residencies.

For more information see:
http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ex.php-URL_ID=35700&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Participation: The Eye of the Storm IV- Video Art & Digital Cultures 2011
 Deadline: 20th June 2011
 Primo Piani LivingGallery is inviting entries for the 6th Edition of the Video Art & Digital Cultures to be held in Lecce (Italy) in the summer from 9th to 20th July 2011. Exhibition concerns experimental music, video, performance, video installations, video animations and films whose production has been made in the last 5 years.

For more information see:
http://www.resartis.org/en/news/upcoming_deadlines/?id_content=200

Competition: Stories of Change
 Deadline: 24th June 2011
 Arup and the Bartlett School of Architecture invite applications to the "Stories of Change" student competition. The organisers are calling for responses to some of the world's most pressing issues within one of three categories: film, architectural design and text. The winners of the competition in each category will share a £1500 prize and their work will be featured at Arup's Phase2 gallery in London.

For more information see:
<http://www.diversofchange.com/communicate/exhibitions/stories-of-change/>

Residency: Kinitras Studio Residency
 Deadline: 24th June 2011
 The aim of this residency centre is to bring the community close to the performing arts, and to give the artists the opportunity to approach a new audience. It is the first 'artistic education centre' for performing arts in Greece. It is open to professional artists and strongly supports multiculturalism. Kinitras Studio provides daily classes workshops in dance, theatre, direction, choreography, music and fine arts.

For more information see:
<http://www.kinitrastudio.com>, (Google Translate recommended!)

Residency: Bundanon Trust Artist in Residence Program 2012
 Deadline: 29th July 2011
 The Artist in Residence Programme offers an inspirational setting for the creative thinkers and professional artists from all disciplines for the development of the new work. Australian and international artists are hosted in the purpose-built studios for up to six weeks. The program is open to professional individual artists and groups by invitation or application.

For more information see:
<http://www.bundanon.com.au/>

Applications open: ARThinkSouthAsia Fellowship
 Deadline: 15th November 2011
 The ARThinkSouthAsia Fellowship is designed to help develop skills, knowledge, networks and experience of potential leaders in the cultural sector of South Asia, including museums, the visual and performing arts and digital media. Fifteen fellows will be selected from across South Asia for the Fellowship which includes a two-week residential course in April 2012 led by experienced international and Indian tutors, an internship in Germany over the fellowship year 2012-13, and a concluding seminar in March the following year.

For more information see:
http://www.artthinksouthasia.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=16

VASL News

Vasl International Residency, Islamabad
 This year's international residency was a great success, with artists Basak Akcakaya, (Turkey), Khanyisile Mbongwa, (South Africa), Muz-zumil Ruheel, (Pakistan), Naqsh Raj, (Pakistan), and Syed Hassan Mujtaba, (Pakistan) living and making work outside Islamabad and producing work for both an Open Day at Rohtas Rawan and an exhibition at Rohtas Gallery. Events throughout the residency were widely attended and Vasl extends its thanks and congratulations to the Rohtas Gallery team who hosted and ran this residency. May it be the first of many!

For more information see:
http://www.vasart.org/vhtml/artnow/residencies/2010/vasl_rohtas_r_residency/index.html

Items of Dual Use in Karachi and Sweden
 When Waheeda Baloch's curatorial project *Items of Dual Use* underwent its first leg in Karachi at the VM Gallery, Vasl supported the programme by hosting artist Henrik Andersson and undertaking an ARTShare. Fahim Rao, a member of the Vasl working group also assisted Andersson in producing a short film for the exhibition. The wider curatorial project, featuring Andersson and Lina Persson from Sweden, and Ayesha Jatoi and Muzumil Ruheel from Pakistan, was later installed at wipsthlm, a gallery space in Sweden.

For more information see:
http://wipsthlm.se/index.php?action=konsthall_aktuell&menu=65su&menu=9
http://www.pakistanartreview.net/5th_Issue/5th_Page_4.html

ARTEd Outreach Workshops
 As part of our education programmes Vasl is proud to be supporting ARTEd, an endeavour to bring basic art education to young people in Pakistan's remote areas. Conceived by Aleem Dad Khan and Nadia Hussain with Mehrbano Khattak, the workshops are designed to promote an environment for cultural exchange and art education not easily available in these parts of the country. Engaging up to thirty students over two weeks, the project this year will take place in Chitral.

For more information see:
http://www.vasart.org/vhtml/artnow/outreach/2011/chitral_workshop/index.html

Artists' News: In the Network & in Diaspora

Imran Qureshi wins the Sharjah Biennial Jury Prize 2011
 Imran Qureshi is the recipient of the Sharjah Biennial 2011 Jury Prize for his work *Blessings Upon the Land of my Love*. Conversing with Hannover based gallery Kunsthalles Faust, featuring Pakistani artists Mehreen Murtaza and Fatima Saeed, Do's looks at how artists translate the realities of their countries of origin into their work, and how their works oppose or coincide with media representations. (While we're with Grey Noise, do check out the relaunched gallery website!)

For more information see:
<http://www.1fmediaproject.net/2011/03/16/sharjah-biennial-2011-uae/>
http://www.thesartistpost.com/community_242_biennial.html

Hama Abbas wins the Abraaj Capital Art Prize
Woman in Black was unveiled at Art Dubai on 15th March. The piece is made of stained glass and installed in a fabricated 'chapel'. Installed within a darkened chamber, *Woman in Black* depicts the iconic image of a fictional super-heroine. The illustrations are reminiscent of Mughal miniature painting, but their forms express traditional stained glass techniques prevalent in the Middle Ages. Abbas was working with curator Sharmine Pereira for the Abraaj Capital Art Prize. In other news, Hama is also featuring in the exhibition, *The Power of Doubt*, curated by Hoo Han as part of PhotoEspaña, and *Sympathy for the Devil*, a group show at the Vanhaeren Art Collection in Brussels. In August she will feature in an exhibition at the Devi Art Centre in New Delhi.

For more information see:
<http://www.burtonson.com/index/ahv/su-the-abraaj-capital-art-prize-recipient-hama-abbas-creation>
http://www.artdaily.org/index.asp?int_sec=2&int_news=47899
<http://www.vanhaerenartcollection.com/n/sympathy-for-the-devil/>
<http://www.deviartfoundation.org/default.asp>

Aisha Khalid & Noor Ali Chagani shortlisted for the V&A Jameel Prize
 The V&A recently announced the names of the ten artists and designers shortlisted for the Jameel Prize. Out of the ten, two are Noor Ali Chagani and Aisha Khalid. The selected artists will all be showing their works at the renowned Victoria and Albert Museum in London from July 21 to September 25, 2011. The winner will be announced on September 12. The bi-annual £25,000 prize, now in its second edition, is sponsored by the Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives (ALCI), and is conceived to further a wider understanding of Islamic culture globally.

For more information see:
<http://migaohart.com/jameel-prize.asp>

Asim Butt's retrospective at the Mohatta Palace
 Mohatta Palace Museum is hosting an exhibition of works by the late artist Asim Butt, commencing on Wednesday May 18, 2011. The show is titled *Rebel Angel: Asim Butt 1978-2010*. The exhibition will continue until July 31, 2011. Asim Butt was a modern artist and social commentator who in the short span of his career produced a critical body of work within and outside his studio. He was innovative in his aesthetic oeuvre, painting large canvases in which he addressed issues concerning human behavior and social norms. He was deeply committed to the socio-political issues of his day and went out into the streets to paint graffiti and murals that invoked public reaction against war and injustice using trenchant symbols and hard hitting messages.

For more information see:
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011/05/19/story_19-5-2011_pg12_1
<http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/24/rebel-angel-exhibition-opens-at-mohatta-palace.html>

Resources and Links

Danka
 A cultural events guide featuring artists, exhibitions and happenings around Pakistan.
<http://www.danka.pk/>

e-flux
 A daily art-news service and monthly journal with free access to academic texts on contemporary art and politics.
<http://www.e-flux.com/journal>

Google Earth Project
 Google Earth has teamed up with galleries and museums including the Van Gogh Museum, The MET and the Uffizi to produce 'walk-around' tours of the collections.
<http://www.googleartproject.com/>

Triangle Network
 Vasl is part of the Triangle Network, (formerly Triangle Arts Trust), which has a new website with a history of the network, a list of partners and details on upcoming international events and calls for applications.
<http://www.trianglearts.org/>

My City Stories
 Vasl is collaborating on Faisal Anwer's My City Stories project online. Be part of this participatory platform by registering and adding your stories of your city.
<http://www.mycitystories.com/>

Grey Noise curatorial collaboration with Kunsthalles Faust
 Running from the 10th of June to the 10th of July, Umer Butt of Grey Noise gallery in Lahore has co-curated an exhibition with Hannover based gallery Kunsthalles Faust, featuring Pakistani artists Mehreen Murtaza and Fatima Saeed. Do's looks at how artists translate the realities of their countries of origin into their work, and how their works oppose or coincide with media representations. (While we're with Grey Noise, do check out the relaunched gallery website!)

For more information see:
http://www.kulturzentrum-faust.de/faust/index.php?article_id=171&clang=0
<http://www.greynoise.org>

Rashid Rana represented by The Lisson Gallery
 After his successful spring site exhibition at the Lisson Gallery, Rashid Rana is now represented by this prominent London-based gallery, who have been exhibiting his work at Art HK and Art Basel this year. At Art Dubai, Rana's work was also presented at a solo stand by Chemould and Chatterjee & Lal, and during this quarter the major exhibition, *21st Century Art in the First Decade*, took place at the Queensland Art Gallery in Australia and featured Rana's work. In the next quarter we look forward to news of a major solo exhibition at Manchester's Cornerhouse Gallery as part of the 2011 Asia Triennial in September, and a solo at Pao Galleries in Hong Kong in collaboration with Gandhara-art.

For more information see:
<http://www.lissongallery.com/#artists/rashid-rana/>
<http://www.theartshouse.com/index.php>
http://aqg.qld.gov.au/exhibitions/past/2010/21st_Century
<http://www.asiatennialmanchester.com/>

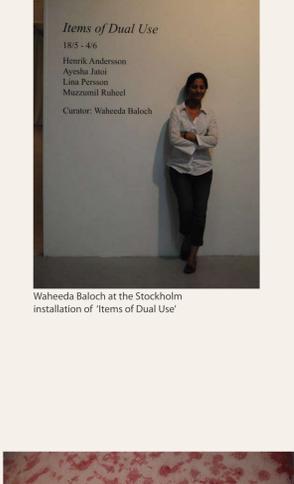
Basir Mahmood selected for Akademie Schloss Solitude artist residency
 Starting in November 2011, Lahore based artist and graduate of BNU Basir Mahmood will undertake a residency at Akademie Schloss in Stuttgart. Artists are offered a studio, stipends and support from the organisation, and will be interacting with multidisciplinary practitioners internationally while attending. "The Akademie, founded at Solitude in 1990, operates in the intermediary space between private and public; where art is reflected upon and produced but where it also finds a connection to the public. The Akademie places particular value on offering its guests another quality of time – one that is better than the artists would experience in their daily lives."

For more information see:
http://www.akademie-solitude.de/410_followship_cond.php

Documentary Heaven
 A fantastic online archive of thousands of documentaries from across the world.
<http://www.documentaryheaven.com/>

Saatchi Online
 Get your work out there – for free! The website associated with the famous Saatchi Gallery includes news, reviews and artists' profiles.
<http://www.saatchionline.com/>

Universes in Universe
 Featuring articles, news, biennale updates, artist profiles and a comprehensive newsletter including opportunities for artists. Universes in Universe is an essential website for artists in Asia, Africa and South America.
<http://www.universes-in-universe.org/eng/index.html>



Artists at residency, Vasl Rohtas International Residency, 2011



Hassan Mujtaba and Ayub Wali at Vasl Rohtas International Residency, 2011



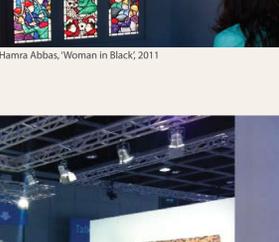
Waheeda Baloch at the Stockholm installation of 'Items of Dual Use'



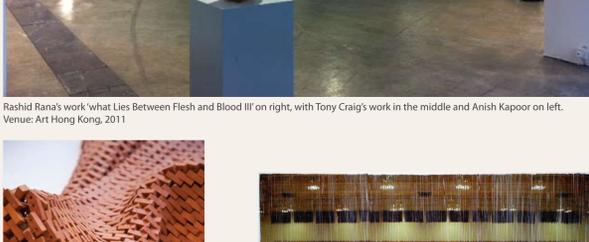
SLICE London-Lahore Skype meeting



Imran Qureshi, 'Blessings on the Land of My Love' at the Sharjah Biennial, 2011



Hama Abbas, 'Woman in Black', 2011



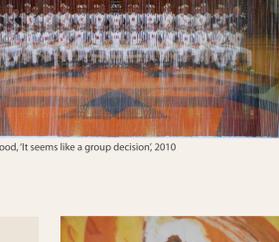
Rashid Rana's work 'What Lies Between Flesh and Blood III' on right, with Tony Craig's work in the middle and Anish Kapoor on left. Venue: Art Hong Kong, 2011



Noor Ali Chagani, 'Life line' (detail), 2010



Basir Mahmood, 'It seems like a group decision', 2010



Asim Butt, 'Self Portrait', 1998 Retrospective: Rebel Angel: Asim Butt 1978-2010 Venue: Mohatta Palace Museum