

Artist statement

A perception in paint of the world in and around us

Quddus Mirza 2026

Profile

Quddus Mirza is a painter, art critic and independent curator. Since October 2022, he is a Professor at the School of Visual Art and Design, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore. He is the former Head of Fine Arts Department at the National College of Arts Lahore, where he taught for more than 30 years, and studied BFA, before acquiring his MA (Painting) from the Royal College of Art, London in 1991. Quddus Mirza was the first Pakistani who was accepted into the Painting School of the prestigious Royal College of Art, London. On his return to Pakistan, he joined his alma mater and contributed in the field of art education, he has trained several generations of artists in Pakistan.

As a practicing artist, he has shown extensively, in more than 50 important group exhibitions held around the world, and had 16 one-person exhibitions in Pakistan and the UK. He represented Pakistan at the Asian Art Biennale Dhaka. He is known for his distinct painting style, innovative themes, and expressive imagery. His works are part of various important collections including the British Museum, Victoria & Albert Museum, Royal College of Art Collection, the National Art Gallery Islamabad and many private collections in Pakistan, India, UK, USA, Germany, Sweden, Nicaragua, Italy and Spain.

Mirza is also recognized as an art curator and has curated a number of exhibitions; including *Celebrating Art; and Love*; at the National Art Gallery, Islamabad; *Exotic Bodies*, based on the miniature paintings from the collection of Victoria and Albert Museum, that was displayed at the Preston Museum in the UK, 2002; and *Beyond Borders: Art from Pakistan* at the National Gallery of Modern Art in Mumbai, India 2005, the largest exhibition of Pakistani art held anywhere outside of Pakistan.

He has been invited to various conferences, seminars, talk shows and literary festivals, in Pakistan, the UK, India, the UAE, Qatar, Kazakhstan, Turkey and the USA, to read papers, give talk, and participate in discussions on art, culture, particularly on Pakistani art.

Quddus Mirza is an art critic with a weekly column appearing in Pakistan's major newspaper, *The News on Sunday*, and for several years contributed regular column on art *Letter from Pakistan in Art India; in Depart* (Bangladesh) as well as other publications like the *Dawn, Herald, The Friday Times, Himal* (Nepal), *Libas, Contemporary* (UK) and *Flash Art* (Italy). He has been invited to various important international museum exhibitions and biennales to review them.

He is the co-author of the book *50 Years of Visual Arts in Pakistan*, and has extensively written essays on Pakistani art in various international catalogues and other publications. He is the editor of online art magazine *Art Now Pakistan*.

Education & Training

1991 Royal College of Art, London. M. A. painting
1986 National College of Arts, Lahore. B.F.A

Distinctions, Honours & Awards

2019 Fellow National College of Arts
1994 Mid - America Art Alliance Fellowship
1992 Punjab Artists Association Award
1991 MacLennan Painting Prize (Royal College of Art)

Professional Experience

2022 - present Professor, SVAD, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore
2021 - 22 Visiting teacher, SVAD, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore
1992 - 21 Professor/Head of Department of Fine Art, National College of Arts
2013 - present Editor Art Now Pakistan (online monthly magazine on art)
2007 - 08 Director/Curator, Zahoor ul Akhlaq Gallery, Lahore

Residencies, Slide Presentations and Lectures / Papers at seminars

2025 Social and Cultural Change Through Art and Design, University of Sargodha
2025 Art of Partition, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore
2019 Making Muse in Mohenjo-Daro. National Art Gallery, Islamabad
2018 Homage to Jamil Naqsh. Jamil Naqsh Museum, Karachi
2018 On Shakir Ali, Shakir Ali Museum Lahore
2015 Architecture of Memory, Closing paper. Lahore Biennale Conference
2013 Art and its Geographical Boundaries. Alhamra Art Centre, Lahore
2012 Curatorial Culture. Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi
2012 Art and the Conflicts of our Times, Alhamra Art Centre, Lahore
2011 Future of the Past, Alhamra Art Centre, Lahore
2010 Art and its South Asian Identity, National Art Gallery, Islamabad.
2008 Eastern Orientalism, Soros Centre of Contemporary Art, Almaty
2008 Art in 21st Century, Sindh University, Jamshoro, Sindh
2008 Intention and Interpretation, Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi
2007 Curating Terror and the Terror of Curating, Delhi Biennale Conference
2004 Art and Globalisation, International Art Critics Conference, Karachi
2000 Miniature in the Age of McDonald's, Pakistan Another Vision, School of Oriental and African Studies, London
2014 - 88 Artist's Talks: Foundation of Museum of Modern Art, Karachi; Khoj International Artists Workshop, Modi Nagar, India; Cleveland Institute of Art, Ohio, USA; Rhode Island School of Design, USA; Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey; Rajasthan School of Art, Jaipur, India

Solo Exhibitions

2023 Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2021 Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2019 Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2015 Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2013 Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2010 Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2008 Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2001 Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
1995 American Centre, Lahore
1995 Rohtas Gallery, Islamaba
1994 Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London
1992 Mina Renton Gallery, London
1992 The Academy, Soho, London
1992 Chawkandi Art, Karachi
1991 Rohtas Gallery, Islamaba
1988 Rohtas Gallery, Islamaba
1987 Nairang Gallery, Lahore

Important Group Exhibitions

2024 Manzar: Art and Architecture from Pakistan 1940s to Today, National Museum of Qatar, Doha
2024 Dharti Dhar Dhar Dharkey Gi. COMO Museum of Art, Lahore
2019 Karachi Biennale 02, Karachi
2015 Private Mythologies, Satrang Gallery, Islamabad
2015 And Nothing but the Truth: Parrhesia II, Koel Gallery, Karachi
2013 Extra-Ordinary, Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2013 Group Exhibition, Latitude 28 Gallery, New Delhi
2009 Going Places, Canvas Art Gallery, Karachi
2002 Around Miniature, Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2001 Takhti, Gallerie Sadequain, Karachi
2000 Another Vision, Art from Pakistan, Brunei Gallery, London
1998 Khoj Show, Modi House, India
1997 Patterning: Exhibition of Australian and Pakistani Artists, Gallery NCA
1997 Rumours of Spring, Lionel Wendt Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka
1995 Concordances, Art-Deco Gallery, Avignon, France
1995 Asian Art Biennale, Dhaka, Bangladesh
1992 Contemporary Paintings from Pakistan, Pacific Asia Museum, Los Angeles
1992 Crossing the Black Waters, The South Gallery London, The City Gallery Leicester
1988 1st Art Biennale, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore
1982 - 97 National Exhibition, National Art Gallery, Islamabad

Collections

British Museum
Royal College of Art, London
National Gallery, Islamabad

Curated Exhibitions

2022 For the Love of Life, Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2022 Before the End of Time, Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2021 If You Have Tears, Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2021 Flower of a Blue Flame, Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2019 Space in Time, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, Switzerland
2018 Body Language, Royaat Gallery, Lahore
2018 In the Beginning was the Word, 'O' Art Space, Lahore
2014 Here and Now, Lahore Art Gallery, Lahore
2012 In Praise of Red, Royaat Gallery, Lahore
2012 Celebrating Art: 30 Years of Rohtas, National Art Gallery, Islamabad
2008 Conversation 1 Elementa Gallery, Dubai
2007 Destination Asia Almaty, Kazakhstan
2007 Take Away; Artists on Food, Zahoor ul Akhlaq Gallery, Lahore
2007 Love, National Art Gallery, Islamabad
2007 Trade Union' Artists: Portraits of Other Artists, Zahoor ul Akhlaq Gallery, Lahore
2006 Flights of Fancy, Royaat Gallery, Lahore
2005 One to One: 58 Years, 58 Artists, 58 Works, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore
2005 Beyond Borders: Art of Pakistan. National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai, India
2002 Exotic Bodies: Exhibition of miniature paintings from Victoria and Albert Museum's collection, Harris Museum, Preston, UK

Essays, Articles, Publications

2025 The Man of Many Letters (Essay) Gulgee Museum: The Handbook.
2024 Remembering Zahoor (Essay) Manzar: Art and Architecture of Pakistan from 1940 to Today, National Museum of Qatar Doha.
2024 Contemporary Colonies (Essay). 'Later: Post-Colonial Art'. Furqaan Ahmed Collection, Karachi
2023 Languages of Manzar (Essay), 'What Comes to My Lips' Ambreen Butt monograph. Black Press, London
2022 Migrant Mythologies (Essay), Osman Youfeszada monograph. V & A Museum, UK
2020 Death, Migration and the Maiden (Essay), 'Adeela Suleman: Not Everyone's Heaven', Skira, Milan, Italy
2015 In Praise of Losses (Essay), 'The Eye Still Seeks: Pakistani Contemporary Art', Penguin India
2013 Miniature, Monster and Modernism (Essay), Influx: 'Contemporary Art in Asia', Sage Publication, India
2013 "Most People are Other People" (Essay), 'Labyrinth of Reflections', Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi
2010 Art in the Age of I. T. (Essay), 'Resembele, Reassemble', Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, India
2010 Surprising Site/Side (Essay), 'The Rising Tide', Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi
2009 Currents in Currency (Essay), 'Mazaar, Bazaar', Oxford University Press, Karachi, Pakistan
2009 Exile at Home: Pakistani Art in Global Age (Essay), 'Hanging Fire', Asia Society NYC/ Yale University Press, USA
2009 The Unusual Suspect (Essay), 'Shilpa Gupta' (Monograph), Prestel Books, UK
2008 Occident and Accidents (Essay), 'Destination Asia', Soros Centre of Contemporary Art, Almaty, Kazakhstan
2008 In Praise of His Hands (Essay), 'Born of Fire: Salahuddin Mian', Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi
2006 Body: Now You See it, Now You Don't (Essay), 'Artists' Voices: Body', Oxford University Press, Karachi
2005 The Muse of Moving Image in the South Asian Art (Essay), 'Zeitsprunge Raumfolgen', Institut fur Auslandbeziehungen, Berlin
1998 Co-author, the book, 50 Year of Visual Arts in Pakistan. Pakistan National Council of the Arts, Islamabad
1998 - present The News on Sunday. Regular Art Critic with a weekly column.
2000 - 18 Art India. Regular Contributor with the column Letter from Pakistan
1999 - present Articles published in journals, Flash Art, Depart, Contemporary, Art Asia Pacific, Libas, Visage and various international catalogues
1997 Co-author, 50 Years of Visual Arts in Pakistan., Published by PNCA
2012 - present Editor Art Now Pakistan