

92 on their own strength. Central to this is his sense of composition, which enables him to build his canvas with apparently disjointed images that still feel cohesive and integrated. From the fluctuating visual frame, the total image finally emerges, bringing an extra-perceptual dimension in focus.

These paintings are disarmingly simple and deal with such elementals that they make you wonder why Zahoor is doing all this. This inquiry into the way of painting is essentially Eastern. It does not define an object or depict the state of a moment. These canvases are suggestive, evocative, unfolding the possibilities for the viewer's participation and allowing the viewer to enter into the aesthetic structure of the painting. "I had become a captive of my own image. There is a touch of finality around me. It seems as if life and creativity have come to a standstill. I don't want to be caught in a situation where painting becomes or is merely an image without a sense of inquiry", he remarked.

So doubt becomes his starting point all over again. Perfect is not the final moment where one can say: it is it or it isn't. Finality is a never-ending process which shows only the way, not the destination. There is no conclusion or Q.E.D. in art. So having done what he had to do, Zahoor is redoing things with self-imposed limitations. He is doing away certain elements, minimising even the essentials. Secondly, he is creating space without definition, using the barest elements, placing forms in a way that generates spatial tension.

For example, a painting starts with one image, say, a ceiling. Below, it finds its relationship through a reflection in a swimming pool. On the other side, there are three unidentified standing silhouettes. There is no apparent relationship. All the objects seem to be suspended in a vacuum, in fluid,

lambent space. Yet, the eye follows the circuit without any difficulty. Here tension and conflict dissolve. Opposition comes to rest in a unified statement. It is and quiet and gradual journey where jolts and shocks are unknown. Yet each image has its own magnetic field.

In another painting, there are lines and lines arrested in blocks of ice, transparent, trying to touch each other, yet they are separate, each acting as a counterpoint for the other. These drawing-cum-paintings have a fragile quality, enhanced by the delicate positioning of the images. These images are weightless and feathery. There is nothing to distract from the pure experience of vision. There is a feeling of limitless horizons. Still, despite all the simplifications and tautening, Zahoor has not been able to renounce the figurative element in the shape of feminine shapes and figures. These are vague and dreamlike, like moving apparitions or hallucinations. These are the only tangible objects in his current work.

His colours, sparingly used, are muted cobalt, red, yellow, blue, and soft green and are delicately controlled. His bigger paintings are monochromatic and are done in black and grey with tonal variations, infusing lot of meaning in the single colour range. His lithographs too are part of his latest creative currents, showing the same controlled placings in space.

Zahoor's preoccupation with space on a two-dimensional surface is more cerebral than intuitional. However, one wonders if this ascetic exercise is the precursor of some bigger event, a simple preparation for a high hurdle, a hop before a very long jump.

HAMEED ZAMAN

JAMIL NAQSH: A MODERN EXPRESSIONIST

Painting for more than 26 years, Jamil Naqsh has long occupied a place of prominence among Pakistani painters. He has a unique and instantly recognizable style, which made a critic to say of him, "even if Jamil Naqsh were not to sign his works, he would be unmistakably recognized by his nudes and birds."

His themes apart, what makes his work distinct is the unmatched skill and craftsmanship plus the nuances of his own particular person and experience which Jamil imparts to his art.

Over the years, Jamil's skill and popularity has made him a shaping influence on many people's aesthetic sensibilities and created a taste for paintings as paintings. It has also helped many a painter to turn away from pure abstraction - a fact which pleases Jamil.

On a few artists, however, he has had a more potent, almost crippling influence. At the moment, there is at least one artist in Pakistan, Karachi's Iqbal Durrani, who tries to imitate not just Jamil's subjects but also his treatments.

Recently Ali Imam, gallery owner, teacher, and painter talked about the difficulty of distinguishing an original from its copy after many years. He said that if after a hundred years, someone were to chance on a Jamil or a Durrani, he could easily mistake one for the other.

Probably not, because no one but Jamil can bring to a Jamil what Jamil does.

Jamil's craft embodies a dedicated apprenticeship to the development of his mind and art which cannot easily be

duplicated. His apprenticeship encompasses influences from such diverse sources as his miniaturist father and his expressionist father-figure, Shakir Ali, Pakistan's pioneering modern artist and Jamil's mentor. Shakir Ali paid his protege the supreme compliment of acknowledging Jamil's superiority.

Other painters in Pakistan have painted nudes and achieved technical perfection, but none can match the classic grandeur of the best of Jamil's canvases, which can hold one spell-bound by their peculiar magic.

As Eastern as his miniatures, Jamil is also as modern an expressionist as any in the West. In his work, there is evident the natural human urge to embrace the best of everything, of all that time has honored, and try to be worthy of it. Over the years, the reviewers have waxed eloquent over him, making him the most written-about of all living Pakistani artists. They have extolled the way he handles colours as pigments being of priceless value.... his textures which he alone can spin and weave.... his handling of the line, his balance between space and form.... His compositions are consummate exercises in the elimination of inessential; no one has used empty, unadorned space more imaginatively than Naqsh. They have exulted over how his pigments achieve the same richness as our ancient oriental masters achieved in the Middle East, Iran, and Turkey with precious metals and gems. They have pointed out how painting for him is a compulsion, not a vacation. His work is matter of pride and joy for any collector.

All this and much more the critics have said over and over again over the years. Despite all their words, the magic of a Jamil remains as undecipherable as ever. Marvel as you may at the texture, the line, the pigment and the fine interplay of

the various elements, you still cannot penetrate the charm with which Jamil captivates you.

Winning applause and many awards over the years, including the Shakir Ali Award, Jamil seems beyond the din and tumult of praise. Attuned only to his own inner evaluation, painting to please his own critical self, he pursues an infinite variation of his preferred themes, just as did one of his favourites, Italian sculptor, painter, draftsman, Marino Marini. Indeed, what has been said of Marino could as well have been said of Jamil: he is not the daring innovator or the impatient experimenter. Instead, he has worked infinite variations on a very limited theme. It is that very concentration, and subtle nuancing of the variations, that attract and then beguiles us.

Talking of the future, Jamil has the self-confidence to declare: "These recent decades of painting in Pakistan will be known not as Sadequain's or anyone else's, but as mine".

SABIHA ASHRAF

AHMED PERVEZ: THE TRAIL BLAZER

In world of Pakistani painting, the restless, vibrant work of Ahmed Pervez stands out from the mainstream, defying labels and denying convenient links with tradition. Originally one of the Lahore group of painters of the early 1950s, Pervez was entirely self-taught. Known even then for his iconoclastic approach to painting, his early paintings owed a little to cubism, and critics drew attention to influences from Matisse and Picasso. This phase was, however, short-lived and his painting moved quickly towards the non-figurative.

He left for London in 1955, where his first few years were hard-going. His first exhibition, in 1959, was at the New Vision Centre Gallery and consisted entirely of small water colours, linear and delicate in form. His colours were lyrical and his imagery reminiscent of the Mughal miniatures from the subcontinent. There was already a definite coherence in his work, an ability to articulate strongly-felt emotions in visual terms.

This first exhibition was followed by four one-man shows at the Lincoln Gallery in 1961 and 1962. He also exhibited in a large number of group shows including the inaugural show of the Commonwealth Institute Art Gallery, where he represented Pakistan among painters of 22 other countries. Other major galleries which showed his works during his years in England included the Redfern Gallery, the Clement Stephens Gallery, the Royal Institute Gallery in London, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester, and Queen's University in Belfast.

This was a prolific period and his output was prodigious. His work sold well and there was distinguished critical acclaim. The *London Times* said of him, "Mr. Pervez, without the legacy of naturalism, boldly pursues a non-figurative course, another aspect perhaps of an Eastern tradition, but more highly charged with the restless energy of modern art..." Victor Musgrave commented, "He is without question, the outstanding artist from Pakistan who has made a very strong impact upon the English world".

He also traveled during this time. He exhibited in Holland in 1960, at the Hague, Dordrecht, Nijmegen and Leyden; and in Belgium in De Warnade, Ghent.

He returned to Pakistan at the end of 1964, after an absence of almost ten years. During the next three years, he set up a studio which he named "Studio Pervez" and held exhibitions in Karachi, Lahore and Rawalpindi. In the later 1960s, he set off again, this time for New York, where he lived and worked for three years. He had two solo shows at the Gallery International in New York and participated in several group shows. He returned to Karachi in 1970. During these nine years, he worked nonstop at a pace which would be bewildering to most painters, holding over half-a-dozen exhibitions in Karachi alone. He held his last one-man show in Lahore in 1978, although he was bitter about the lack of understanding from the press and viewers. His long-overdue official recognition came in the form of the President's Medal for Pride of Performance in 1978, which sustained him for a while before his last troubled illness.

An assessment of the importance of Pervez's work in the context of Pakistan's painting is now coming about. His output in water colours, gouache and oils is large, yet the public galleries own only a small selection of his work. After his return from London, his forms grew more frenetic and seemed to radiate from a central pivot. These works were painted in gouache on board. The works of his later years were mainly in oils on canvas. The works of his earlier years, in terms of form and colour, seem to have an inner repose. They live in a large space surrounded by a quiet sea of colour. These paintings, non-figurative as always, still evoke memories of plants and flowers which pour out of the canvas, glowing, turbulent, in constant motion; the colours, rich, strong and be-jewelled.

Pervez's life seems to be so intertwined with the imagery in his paintings that one is constantly tempted to draw parallels. The brilliance and effervescence of colour and form were reflected in his intense, agitated life-style. His constant demanding of himself and of the world around him, drove him finally to the illness that took his life at the early age of 53. Yet it was just this forceful relentlessness translated onto his canvases which created in Pakistan a new understanding of the essence of the activity which we call painting. Breaking away from both the literary and the literal, the assembling of shape, colour and form in the context of the two-dimensional, Pervez defied all comfortable visual landmarks. He makes explosions of colour that defy description which occasionally are delineated to create areas of emphasis. The shapes and forms, the constant motion, can be both decorative and menacing; there is little that is doctrinaire. There is no imitation or narration, only an intensely dynamic vision, vivid and personal.

There is no doubt that today in Pakistan, a large number of painters owe their *modus operandi* to the trail blazer that was Ahmed Pervez.

SALIMA HASHMI

Syria

Contemporary Artist in Syria

Contemporary art in Syria was born in the twentieth century. It emerged under the influence of international trends in art, and developed under the modern Arab upheaval. As it came to be a mirror of modern reality in the Arab world, it went through an intricate process in which alien elements were combined with national ones to provide a form of art that was living and sustainable. From this very beginning, the Syrian artist, being released from the outer pressure that before had denied his independence, looked forward to expressing himself.

The development of Syrian art can be divided into three stages:

THE OTTOMAN STAGE

During Ottoman rule, which lasted until 1918, artistic work began to appear but was by and large documentary. In these works, the artist imitated the Ottoman styles found in the palace of the Sultans. The Ottoman rulers commissioned painters to paint portraits for them, as did the upper class. The painters had to respond to the needs of such a market.

The early painters were all professionals, and quite a few painters took refuge in their own reality. Among these pioneers were Taufiq Tareq and Rashad Mustapha.

Tareq, in particular, developed his techniques, either by borrowing from European or Arabic tradition with a sense of history and sympathy for the early Islamic Period. Mustapha remained faithful to the palace style emphasizing details and articulate lines.

THE FRENCH MANDATE STAGE

During the French Mandate (1920-1946), there were many developments in Syrian art. French impressionism influenced a flourishing art movement in which local domestic themes and subjects were highly appreciated.

Apart from this local variant of Impressionism, there was also a classical school. From this school came a new art of portraiture and landscapes. Soon the artists began to seek newer themes and fresher techniques. Michael Kirsheh and George Khouri led the Impressionists, and Mahmoud Jalal, Said Tahsin, and Taufiq Tareq were among the classicists, whose interests were generally documentary.

There is no doubt that the Impressionist school had awakened the artist from indulging in commercial work, and introduced him to the beauty of nature around him. It put him in touch with the countryside and old districts and back lanes in towns. This was a real success for Impressionists, bringing many admirers and clients.

The classicists developed in a different way. As a reaction to the pro-European school, they combined Classicism with historical subjects, illustrating famous Arab battles.

Despite their differences, the two schools worked together to create and establish a national art movement which helped arouse people's hatred of foreign domination and express national aspirations.

THE LIBERATION STAGE

After the French had evacuated Syrian territory in 1946, the art movement entered a new era in which artists sought a national flavour in subject matter and independence in style.

Thus, Impressionism began to dominate the scene, and a new generation emerged in which artists like Nassir Chaura, Rachad Kussaibati and Nobar Sabbagh encouraged a new taste and sense of reality.

Though other schools of art, such as surrealism and symbolism, found supporters, they remained limited in both scale and creativity.

It was only the realistic school which survived. This was led by Soubhi Shoaib, Abdulkader Naeb, and Nazem Jaafari who lived in the age dominated by Impressionism.

POST-LIBERATION

Each of these stages had its own struggle and goals but they manifested some common concept by reason of which the artist could not cross dominating styles. The painter still preserved the unities of subject-matter, time and place. He took western techniques and styles and tried to assimilate them through his choice of subject and colour, or by using decorative elements from the Arab heritage. He remained faithful to the traditional western form of painting.

It was not until the Suez Crisis and the war in 1956 that these concept began to change and a new reality emerged. A new generation of painters emerged, led by Adham Ismail, who employed a mixture of arabesque and modern techniques that fulfilled his aspiration to establish a modern art that was Arabic in both style and spirit.

It was an era of looking backward and forward. Artists were again attracted by the Arabic heritage in decoration and in painting. Artists also studied the work of the European painters who were inspired by Arabic art and life, such as Matisse and Paul Klee, but they remained close to their era's

concern with Arabic unity while also seeking stylistic independence. Naim Ismail is the artist who best represents the questing nationalistic and political spirit of this time which so many artists were looking for.

THE 1960s

During the sixties, the art movement expanded and greatly developed. This period was ruled by three main trends:

The Subjective Trend

Early in the sixties, some artists stressed the importance of subjective factors in artistic creation. For these artists, there was a strong relation between the artist's life and his works. The painters used human faces and bodies to load them with his problems and frustrations. The artist's feelings and subconscious were reflected in them. Among the prominent figures of this trend were Fateh Mudarress and Loai Kayali, who connected their inner struggles with the scenes or people whom they painted.

Through subjective in approach, the artists of this trend tried to develop their work by taking inspiration from national heritage portraying local subjects, or combining subjective factors with objective features.

The Abstract Trend

In seeking a balance of elements in painting, many artists found it easier to approach abstractions. Mahmoud Hammed, a treasure of Arabic calligraphy, imbued his letters with both intellect and emotions, creating a balance between them.

This trend towards abstraction attracted some highly talented artists. Nassir Chaura, for instance, portrayed landscapes which were a balance between realism and abstraction, with

a transparent and sensitive sense of colours. Elias Zayat used folkloric legends and ancient icons and decorative elements, and used them to portray modern subjects. Nachat Zo'bi used folkloric elements to portray modern subject matter. Asma Fayoumi used a mixture of purple and black to portray women.

Thus, these painters entered into abstraction as a starting point to reach their own ends. Asaad Arabi, Abdulkader Arnaout, and Sakhr Farzat, with few others, were remarkable in their use of abstraction, mixing it with realism, poetical features or emotion.

In this way, the kind of pure abstraction found in European painting has rarely found its way into Syrian abstract painting.

The Objective Trend

In this trend, painters stress the importance of human social subjects and embraces people's problems on both individualistic and social levels.

In doing this, the painters used human elements and take the male as a symbol of common cause, and the female as a symbol of mother earth and fertility.

In the 1960s, many painters followed this trend. All of them regarded the human as a precious being although each of them approached representing humans and human dilemmas in a different style. For example, Marwan Kassab Bashi distinguished himself with a high aesthetic approach. Some others of this younger generation used the same style with a sense of heritage. Most of them were realists.

The realists varied much in their techniques. Although they borrowed from Cubism, Italian realism, and Socialist Realism, they remained faithful to their own national reality and human situations. For examples, see the works of Khuzaima Alwani, Giath Akross, Faik Dahdouh, Khalil Akkary, and Ghassan Sibai.

Alwani took the horse as a symbol of human aspiration. In such works, no doubt symbols played an active role. Painters often combine contradictory elements in one work, if necessary, to justify their needs for a special structure. Nazir Nabaa, in his work "The martyr", for instance, portrays a dead man surrounded by flowers and music players, but a combination of such elements as lamps, flowers, a flute suggest a resurrection myth that justifies the painter's building an epic composition.

In fact, contemporary Syrian painters look to innovation and experimentation, not for their sake, but to fulfill the task of serving as a mirror of reality and a witness to the era. Artists are urged on by the fact that their people need their creativity.

Summary

To sum up, one can say that contemporary artists in Syria have a strong link with their society and its affairs, which they truly reflect. While they trace the present to have their subjects, they also return to the past to search for their roots, and look to the future with hope. Artists are the people's conscience, pushing for renewal and stimulating for a better life.

TAREQ AL-SHARIF

Director of Fine Arts, Ministry of Culture

Brunei Darussalam

Contemporary Art : The Brunei Darussalam Experience **Seni Kontemporer : Pengalaman Brunei Darussalam**

Brunei Darussalam should equip herself with the necessities of nation building in various fields. Art is one of them. As with other forms of art, visual art reflects the thinking of the people, although works of art are produced by people in small groups and individually. As a small, young, independent country, Brunei Darussalam's achievements are certainly a bit backward in some aspect and the country is less exposed to the international level, if compared to her regional neighbors [Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines are the closest neighbors. ED].

Every nation possesses their own special features of art. Although the universal elements do exist, the impact of political, economic, cultural and environmental conditions influence more than anything else and induce different forms and movements.

It may be mentioned that art in Brunei Darussalam emerged from thoughts of its own people and was not established by any external powers or outsiders, as occurred with some countries in this region, even though Brunei Darussalam was also a protectorate of foreign power.

Visual arts, painting in particular, is a new venture in the country, although art in general has been known since the establishment of the formal educational system in the country. Art was added as an additional subject. As with other protectorate and colonized countries, Brunei Darussalam did not develop and did not receive attention and priority during the colonial period. However, in the 1950s and earlier, works of art were produced as part-time activities, especially by teachers and students who acquired teacher training from abroad. In those years, a college for technical students was

Brunei Darussalam seharusnya melengkapi dirinya dengan keperluan-keperluan dalam rangka pembangunan bangsa dalam berbagai bidang. Seni adalah salah satu diantaranya. Seperti halnya dengan bentuk seni lain, seni visual juga mencerminkan cara berpikir masyarakat walaupun karya-karya seni dihasilkan oleh masyarakat dalam kelompok kecil dan secara pribadi. Sebagai sebuah negara muda yang merdeka, hasil yang dicapai jelas sedikit lebih terbelakang dalam beberapa aspek dan kurang tampil dalam tingkat internasional dibanding dengan tetangga kawasanya yang sudah jauh di depan.

Setiap bangsa memiliki sifat masing-masing seni. Walaupun unsur-unsur universal itu ada, dampak politis, ekonomis, kultural dan kondisi lingkungan, lebih daripada hal-hal yang lain, mempengaruhi dan mendorong timbulnya bentuk-bentuk dan gerakan-gerakan yang berbeda.

Dapat dikatakan bahwa seni di Brunei Darussalam timbul dari pemikiran-pemikiran masyarakatnya sendiri dan bukan dibentuk oleh kekuatan-kekuatan luar atau pihak luar seperti terjadi pada beberapa negara di kawasan ini, walaupun Brunei Darussalam juga merupakan sebuah protektorat dari kekuatan asing.

Seni visual, khususnya lukisan merupakan wawasan baru yang ditelusuri di Brunei Darussalam walaupun seni secara umum sudah dikenal sejak berdirinya sistem pendidikan di negara tersebut. Seni dipilih sebagai subyek tambahan. Seperti juga halnya dengan negara-negara protektorat dan koloni lainnya yang belum membuat garis besar perencanaan nasional yang mantap, seni di Brunei Darussalam tidak berkembang dan

also established.

In the 1960s art began to take change, the attention given to art by a group of people to be visible. The government of Brunei Darussalam created art as profession in a number of governmental departments and started sending students overseas to study art. But did not plan to establish an art college in the country.

The official duties of artists in government department are to prepare art work publication and graphic production. But due to self-realization and the challenges of development artists are forced to develop and active in all from of art within their capabilities, painting in particular. Painting which is considered to preserve specific features is yet to developed. Several young artists in a government department have been working earnestly in painting it was urged after office hour and during holidays, unfortunately until today there are no full-time painters.

Enormous changes had taken place in the history of art in Brunei Darussalam conceptually and technically. In 1969, two young artists held an exhibition in conjunction with the birthday of His Highness the Sultan. Although their exhibited work of art were still based on realism and tradition, they had changed from static to dramatic tradition and took into account the concept, subject, medium, presentation and arrangement that were considered important in art. The following years the two artists continued to organize art competitions along with other talented artists. The endeavors of the two artists have at least awakened certain group of people to be closer with art. The efforts were also responded encouraging by teachers and students to produce original pieces of work which depicted the identity of the people

tidak memperoleh perhatian dan prioritas. Bahkan pada tahun-tahun 1950-an atau jauh lebih awal dari itu ada beberapa karya seni yang dihasilkan sebagai kegiatan paruh waktu khususnya oleh para guru dan siswa yang memperoleh pendidikan keguruan di luar negeri. Dalam tahun-tahun tersebut juga dikembangkan sebuah sekolah tinggi bagi siswa teknik.

Dalam tahun-tahun 1960-an seni mulai mengalami perubahan. Perhatian yang diberikan kepada seni oleh sekelompok masyarakat mulai tampak. Pemerintah Brunei menciptakan seni sebagai sebuah profesi di dalam sejumlah departemen-departemen pemerintah dan mulai mengirim siswa ke luar negeri untuk mempelajari seni, tetapi tidak merencanakan untuk mendirikan sebuah sekolah tinggi seni di negara tersebut.

Tugas resmi dari seniman-seniman di dalam departemen-departemen pemerintah adalah untuk menyiapkan karya seni untuk publikasi dan produksi grafis. Tetapi karena kesadaran diri dan tantangan-tantangan pengembangan, seniman-seniman tersebut dipaksa untuk mengembangkan dan aktif dalam semua bentuk seni sesuai dengan kemampuan mereka, khususnya seni lukis. Lukisan yang dianggap melestarikan aspek-aspek spesifik baru dikembangkan belakangan. Beberapa seniman muda di dalam departemen pemerintah telah bekerja dengan sepenuh hati di dalam lukisan. Hal itu dilaksanakan sesudah jam kerja dan selama hari-hari libur, sayangnya sampai sekarang belum ada seorangpun yang bekerja penuh sebagai pelukis.

Perubahan-perubahan luar biasa telah terjadi di dalam sejarah seni di Brunei baik secara konseptual dan teknis. Pada 1969, dua orang seniman mengadakan sebuah pameran bersamaan dengan hari ulang tahun Yang Mulia Sri Sultan. Walaupun

nation. Than the group formed the Brunei Darussalam Artists Association.

The activities in art pave the way and give opportunities to the art and artists. More art activities were established to commemorate important occasions. Work of art reflected a cultural identity that was particular in the annals of modern art activities in Brunei Darussalam. The varieties of figurative images in ritual, festivals and in the mode of work, varieties of pastimes, scenes portraying landscape including waters village and views of mosques were still favoured subject. These were depicted in various media such as oil, acrylic, water colour, plaster and batik. Abstract painting was also exhibited.

Despite that all, art scene in Brunei Darussalam was not always well, there were many obstacles. Brunei Darussalam art is not moving ahead as fast as it should because there is a dire lack of stimulation for local artists who have not enjoyed lavish patronage or interest from the higher institutions or powerful as has been the case in other countries. In fact there are many cases of this situation such as education system, patronage and sponsorship, instruction and activities effecting the development of art in Brunei Darussalam. Termination of art scholarship for students and inconsistent recognition of art as a subject of higher institution in Brunei Darussalam diminished and decreased aims interest of involvement by young people. A moment the art scene was very quiet, the rare art exhibition would be transitory event and easily forgotten. The subject matter was derived directly never as the main protagonist of visual imagery.

Since Brunei Darussalam's resumption of independence in 1984 art seem to be recalled and to be reactive, highly needed to represent the country in regional and international

karya seni mereka yang dipamerkan masih didasarkan pada realisme dan tradisi, mereka telah merubahnya dari tradisi statis ke tradisi dramatis dan memperhitungkan konsep, subyek, medium, presentasi dan penyusunan yang dianggap penting di dalam seni.

Dalam tahun-tahun berikutnya ke dua seniman tersebut terus mengorganisir kompetisi-kompetisi dan pameran-pameran bersama dengan seniman-seniman berbakat yang lainnya. Usaha-usaha yang dilakukan oleh ke dua seniman tersebut setidaknya membangunkan kelompok tertentu dari masyarakatsehingga menjadi semakin dekat kepada seni. Usaha-usaha tersebut memperoleh tanggapan dalam bentuk dorongan bagi beberapa guru dan siswa untuk menciptakan karya-karya asli yang mengungkapkan jati diri bangsa. Kemudian kelompok tersebut mendirikan Asosiasi Seniman Brunei (*Brunei Artist Association*).

Kegiatan-kegiatan seni membuka jalan dan memberi kesempatan kepada seni dan para seniman. Lebih banyak kegiatan-kegiatan art kemudian dilaksanakan untuk merayakan peristiwa-peristiwa penting. Karya seni mencerminkan sebuah jati diri kebudayaan yang khusus di dalam perayaan-perayaan tahunan dari kegiatan-kegiatan seni moderen di Brunei Darussalam. Beragam gambaran-gambaran figuratif dalam ritual, festival-festival dan dalam cara kerja, beragam kegiatan-kegiatan waktu senggang, pemandangan yang menggambarkan pemandangan alam seperti desa air dan gambaran-gambaran mesjid masih merupakan subyek yang digemari. Ini semuanya diungkapkan di dalam berbagai media seperti minyak, akrilik, cat air, plaster dan batik. Lukisan abstrak juga dipamerkan.

Walaupun demikian, situasi seni di Brunei Darussalam tidak selalu

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art and cultural events which the Brunei Darussalam as a member of the association. Art activities have been more sophisticated. Brunei Darussalam a combination of talented artist came together to produced diverse work and influence each other. The characteristics and subjects can be said to be a combination of both Eastern tradition and Western influence. The modern abstract art in Brunei Darussalam did not really progress, some trained artists did not fully succeed in grouping societies appreciation for their production. Realism in landscapes and patriots were more favoured even by some young artists. Brunei modern contemporary art do not seem very mature but involvement by Brunei artists in regional and international activities has been a great experience and an emerging force for evaluation. The artists who achieved prominence in the sixties explored some of modern art practice for the artist to work than one medium in order to explore particular problems.

Brunei Darussalam artists began questioning the validity of their work in the context of Brunei Culture and in relation to the international scene. For this reasons it was understood that modern art in Brunei Darussalam should attempt to concentrate on the issue. For example, the current impulse toward conceptualism, the reflection of Malay and Islamic sensibilities and art as a means for documenting social issues area varied attempts to resist the orthodoxy of main stream international formalist styles. Basically Brunei Darussalam artists attempted to express the national philosophy of the Malay, Islamic, Monarchy. In the deliberate search for their own identity, a number of leading artists with the assistance of Malay and Islam motifs have created strong and true cultural expression. Only few artists tried to change attitude which was expanding its horizons, the artists has begun to discover new media and were experimenting with new form,

mengalir dengan lancar, ada banyak rintangan. Seni Brunei Darussalam tidak bergerak maju ke depan secepat seharusnya karena tidak adanya dorongan bagi seniman lokal yang tidak menikmati dukungan mewah atau perhatian dari lembaga-lembaga yang lebih tinggi atau berkuasa seperti yang terjadi di negara-negara lain, tidak adanya pengajaran dan kegiatan-kegiatan yang memberi akibat bagi perkembangan seni di Brunei. Penghentian beasiswa seni bagi para siswa dan pengakuan yang tidak konsisten terhadap seni sebagai sebuah pokok bahasan dari lembaga-lembaga tinggi telah menurunkan dan mengurangi perhatian dan keikut-sertaan generasi muda. Ketika situasi seni sangat sepi, pameran seni yang jarang akan menjadi sementara sifatnya dan mudah dilupakan. Subyek bahasanya diturunkan langsung, tidak pernah sebagai tokoh utama dari gambaran visual.

Sejak Brunei Darussalam memperoleh kemerdekaan pada 1984 seni tampak mulai diingat dan diaktifkan kembali, karena sangat dibutuhkan untuk mewakili negara tersebut dalam peristiwa-peristiwa budaya kawasan dan internasional di mana Brunei Darussalam merupakan anggota asosiasi. Kegiatan-kegiatan seni telah menjadi lebih canggih di mana seniman-seniman yang merupakan kombinasi seniman-seniman berpengalaman yang berbakat dan seniman-seniman yang terlatih berkumpul bersama untuk menghasilkan karya-karya yang beragam dan mempengaruhi antara satu dengan yang lain. Seni abstrak moderen di Brunei tidak banyak berkembang, beberapa seniman-seniman yang terlatih tersebut tidak sepenuhnya berhasil dalam mengelompokkan apresiasi masyarakat bagi hasil produksi mereka. Seni kontemporer moderen Brunei tidak tampak terlalu matang tetapi keikut-sertaan seniman-seniman Brunei dalam kegiatan-kegiatan kawasan dan internasional merupakan pengalaman hebat dan merupakan suatu kekuatan yang tumbuh untuk dievaluasi.

very much concerned with texture, with desired effect, with the process of creation and the sheer experience of painting. These could be seen since the last few years at various art competitions and exhibitions. Some judges and group of community were not aware about these acquisitions. Unlucky for the artists, Brunei Darussalam do not have art critic to bring up and make people understand whats Brunei Darussalam contemporary artists are trying to achieve. It is resultant that the communities still lack understanding of modern art; while people are definitely interested. The modern artists would not have achieved such a success without the help of art critic. In fact foreign art galleries and promoters had been interested in art works of some Brunei Darussalam artists and had exhibited their works outside together with wellknown foreign artists.

In this exhibition, Brunei Darussalam is represented by works of three painters and two photographers. About the painters, their creation is probably different from the common scene of works by most of Brunei Darussalam artists had produced. They were concerned with subjects and materials then expressed it on the canvas or board deliberate transformed in different form. The nation was represented through a new structure, organization and sense of order to the materials they adopt. Living in the country life seem to be in order and less struggle, relied on exuberances to cause people neglected of all about. Nature created to produced wealth to be explore by living object, human the most perfect to dominate but there are substance not permanently. They had seen the nature destroyed by nature. What is permanent, God (Allah) the creator, the merciful and Compassionate. Strong Malay tradition and Islamic belief are predominate in the nation of Brunei Darussalam contemporary art, artists are very con-

Seniman-seniman yang telah terkenal dalam tahun-tahun 1860-an menelusuri beberapa gaya ganda dari ekspresi gambar. Salah satu kecenderungan praktek seni moderen adalah bagi sang seniman untuk berkarya melalui lebih dari satu medium agar dapat menelusuri masalah-masalah tertentu.

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Brunei Darussalam mulai mempertanyakan keabsahan karya mereka dalam konteks kebudayaan Brunei dan dalam hubungannya dengan situasi internasional. Untuk sebab-sebab ini dimengerti bahwa seni modern di Brunei Darussalam seharusnya digunakan unruk mengkonsentrasikan diri pada masalah-masalah ini. Misalnya, kecenderungan ke arah konseptualisme yang ada sekarang, pencerminan dari kepekaan Melayu dan Islam dalam seni sebagai cara untuk mendokumentasikan masalah-masalah sosial adalah berbagai usaha untuk menahan diri dari kemapanan gaya-gaya formalis internasional yang umum. Pada dasarnya seniman-seniman Brunei Darussalam berusaha untuk mengungkapkan filsafat nasional Melayu, Islam, Kerajaan. Dalam pencarian jati diri mereka yang disengaja, sejumlah seniman-seniman yang memimpin melaksanakan peran-peran mereka di dalam situasi seni Brunei Darussalam dengan sumbangan-sumbangan baru dan diikuti oleh beberapa seniman baru dengan bantuan kepekaan Melayu dan Islam. Motif telah menciptakan ungkapan kebudayaan yang kuat dan benar. Hanya beberapa seniman yang mencoba untuk merubah sikap yang memperluas cakrawala, seniman-seniman itu telah mulai menemukan media baru dan sedang bereksperimen dengan bentuk baru, yang sangat memperhatikan tekstur, dengan efek yang diinginkan, dalam proses penciptaan dan semata-mata pengalaman melukis. Hal-hal seperti ini dapat dilihat sejak beberapa tahun terakhir di berbagai kompetisi dan pameran seni. Beberapa juri dan kelompok-kelompok masyarakat tidak menyadari adanya keberhasilan ini. Tidak menguntungkan

cerned about moral and good performing, what is permissible or not in Islam, obey it would let the truth.

Brunei Darussalam contemporary art achieved the standard in term of aesthetic value and culture philosophy. It is hard to say, existence of modern art Brunei Darussalam were effected by many obstacles as mention earlier, such as due to the absence of art college, up hill struggle to get recognition or patronage from individual power and private sectors; rare of art exhibition, absence of art gallery and one should know that in Brunei Darussalam there are no full-time painters. Most of the artists work in various occupations in government departments, this gives them limited time to pursue own artistic inclinations. Such a situation has clearly effected the development of art, but in spirit Brunei Darussalam artists have felt the vibration of the awakening energy of the creative forces in the arts. However there still remains much to be accomplished.

bagi para seniman, Brunei Darussalam tidak mempunyai kritikus seni untuk mengemukakan dan membuat masyarakat mengerti tentang apa yang sedang diusahakan oleh seniman kontemporer Brunei. Seniman-seniman modern tersebut tidak akan mencapai kesuksesan tanpa pertolongan kritikus seni. Walaupun demikian galeri-galeri seni asing dan para promotor telah tertarik pada karya-karya seni beberapa seniman Brunei Darussalam dan telah memamerkan karya-karya mereka di luar Brunei bersama dengan seniman-seniman asing yang terkenal.

Di dalam pameran ini, Brunei Darussalam diwakili oleh karya-karya dari tiga pelukis dan dua pemotret. Mengenai pelukis-pelukis tersebut, Karya mereka barangkali berbeda dari cara berpikir umum dari karya-karya sebagian besar seniman Brunei Darussalam yang sudah dihasilkan. Mereka melibatkan diri dalam subyek-subyek bahan-bahan yang kemudian diungkapkan dalam kanvas atau papan yang berubah rupa di dalam bentuk berbeda. Konsep ini diwakilkan melalui sebuah struktur, organisasi dan pandangan mengenai keteraturan yang baru terhadap bahan-bahan yang mereka pakai. Kehidupan di pedesaan tampaknya teratur dan tidak terlalu merupakan sebuah perjuangan, bergantung pada semangat yang menyebabkan masyarakat mengabaikan semua hal-hal yang lain. Alam diciptakan untuk menghasilkan kekayaan untuk dipergunakan oleh mahluk hidup, dengan umat manusia yang paling utama dalam hal mendominasinya tetapi ada hal-hal pokok yang tidak abadi. Mereka telah melihat alam dihancurkan oleh alam. Apa yang abadi, Tuhan (Allah) Sang Pencipta, yang Penuh Kasih Sayang dan Belas Kasih. Tradisi Melayu yang kuat dan kepercayaan Islam sangat dominan di dalam seni kontemporer Brunei Darussalam, seniman-seniman memperlihatkan perhatian mereka tentang moral dan tingkah laku yang baik, apa yang diijinkan dan tidak diijinkan oleh

Islam, harus dipatuhi karena akan membawa kepada kebenaran.

Di Brunei Darussalam seni kontemporer telah mencapai standar dalam hal nilai estetik dan filsafat kebudayaan. Sulit untuk dikatakan, keberadaan seni moderen Brunei Darussalam dipengaruhi oleh berbagai rintangan seperti yang sudah disebutkan sebelumnya, seperti tidak adanya sekolah tinggi seni, usaha yang sulit untuk memperoleh pengakuan atau dukungan dari kekuatan pribadi dan sektor-sektor swasta; pameran seni yang jarang, tidak adanya galeri seni dan orang harus tahu bahwa di Brunei Darussalam tidak ada orang yang bekerja penuh sebagai pelukis, sebagian besar seniman bekerja dalam berbagai pekerjaan di departemen-departemen pemerintah. Hal ini membatasi waktu mereka untuk berusaha mengikuti kecenderungan-kecenderungan seni mereka sendiri. Situasi seperti itu jelas telah berpengaruh terhadap perkembangan seni, tetapi dalam semangat seniman Brunei Darussalam telah merasakan getaran-getaran dari kesadaran mengenai perkembangan-perkembangan kawasan dan internasional dan semangat yang ada dalam kekuatan-kekuatan seni itu sendiri, tetapi masih tetap ada banyak hal yang harus diperoleh.

Qatar *Schools of Contemporary Art*

The State of Qatar has an active policy of supporting and sponsoring fine arts, which includes supporting extensive arts education programs, sending qualified artists for study abroad, bringing significant exhibitions to Qatar, and participating, whenever possible, in international exhibitions such as this one.

Below is a description of the major schools that can be found in Qatar's fine arts today.

SELF TAUGHT, OR "NATURAL" ARTISTS

This group includes all those artists who have not had the opportunity to enter academic studies of art, especially classical studies. Their natural character gives a true and real picture to their works, because their spontaneous expression in their works is the main factor in their creativity. They use original, earth-like colors, and present direct perceptions far from fabrication or formality. Ever the surface of the work, and the composition of light and shadow, have shown true nature. In this respect, the artists Sultan al-Ghanem is among the top artists, as can be seen in his painting of Umm al-Hanaya. We can see that the artists has found a firm determination in the form of painting a ship after he has obtained its description from storytellers who live nearby, and after he has researched the forms of architecture which are found in the area near the sea. We can also see how the launching of the ship from the land to the open sea portrays the people in Dawha in a constant natural movement, actively exploring and expecting this important occasion in the city.

We have found this kind of art as something nature especially in the exploration of male artists. There are other themes explored, including traditional houses, the sea, clouds, and even the landscape a the artists express and transfer their emotion directly to the object.

Another artist in this school is Sultan al-Saliti, who has his own distinctive touch of the brush, especially when using water colors to portray human figures. Majid al-Muslimani uses mostly wood, in the form of old doors, and portrays people's daily life. Mayy al-Kawari carries out most of his work in an open studio. His works focus on traditional house architecture and the people who live in the houses.

IMPRESSIONISTIC SCHOOL

Light might be the main characteristic that distinguishes the Arab Gulf region, especially the state of Qatar, from other Arab countries. Qatar is flat and has very few hills. Since the sky is clear year-round, the sun sheds its direct natural light to the earth, making it intense and clear. This light which shines brightly on the surface of the territorial water of the Arab Gulf, has provided the material for creating a vivid plastic arts.

Muhammah 'Ali Kamlun is the top artist of this school. His themes include the sea, ships at anchor in the harbor, ships sailing on the open sea, sailors waiting for departure, and so on. Ali also addresses themes on land, such as the beauty of the land, the hunger, and so on.

The impressionistic method is also followed by Muhammad 'Ali Kawari, who has created in the past some impressionistic works such as paintings of swords. What distinguishes him is the peace and tranquillity which are distinctly seen in the colors and themes of his works. Light is also dominant in his works, whether they portray sea or land.

The female artist Hissah al-Marikhi has also achieved a great deal in this school in her works of ships and so on. The female artists Maryam Muhammad 'Abd Allah has created

some paintings dealing with the natural environment, some in dry paste colors, and some quick sketches which portray the faces of local personalities such as a goldsmith, a brass founder, silent nature, and so on.

REALISTIC SCHOOL

This school has played a distinct role in spreading and introducing painting among the common people and private organizations. This is because the themes are quite clear and it does not require much time for those who want to see it. And since the artistic value of the this kind of art is of secondary importance to the artist, he has focused more of his attention to display the object in every detail and as accurately as possible.

The most important artist of this school is 'Ali Sharif, who has created some works displaying nature accurately and in very detailed ways, and has promoted the development of this school in Qatar. In this connection, we can see his works dealing with the local natural environment such as camel caravans, horses, sailors, and the return from pearl diving. Since these themes consist of many people, we can find that he has exploited the element of dynamic movement in his work, and crating a dynamic and balanced movement of objects.

The other major artist in this school is Mr. Yusuf al-Sharif, who has taken architecture as the basis of his personal enjoyment and his works. He pays much attention to the door, its form and designs; and house architecture, with its distinct plastered decoration. Yusuf has also paid much attention to the yellowish color of the soil, which is the main character of old Qatar's houses. He expresses his personality inside this architecture in constant, dynamic movement in order to show a daily human creation.

The same method is followed by the artist Muhammah al-Jidah. The main characteristic of his works is that he excels in using dynamic colors. His main concern is the object and how to fill the whole canvas with his full painting. Therefore, we can find the objects from the sea are very dominant in his works, such as birds, spreading fishing nets, repairing ships, children's' suffering, taming and training horses, meadows, and so on. He also likes to portray Bedouin life, such as herding camels and hunting.

Another artist who has achieved more progress in this school is Majid Hilal. His works are characterized by the distinct color of his decoration, form, and clearness, especially in his works depicting the flat lands such as desert and open sky.

ARAB SCHOOL (ARAB CALLIGRAPHY)

There is another Arabic school which was established in 1971 in Baghdad. This school relies upon Arabic lettering in its purely aesthetic aspects, and aims at achieving an Arab beauty. Perhaps the most important figure in this school is the artist Yusuf Ahmad, who has based his works on the Arab lettering for about ten years. In his first phase, was can see the use of letters directly, and their relationship with decoration based on the unity of geometrical vegetation. In the second phase, these kinds of decorations began to fade away until they fully disappeared. This type of Arabic script has emerged as the main element in a plastic arts which have great potential for business.

The artist 'Ali Hasan deals with Persian script along with modern script, especially in graphic arts. The female artists Wafiqah Sultan uses Islamic golden color and creates ornamented decoration which is reminiscent of Qatar's garments, wood carvings, and plaster ornaments. She also

bases creations on verses or sentences taken from the Holy Qur'an. However, she adds her woman's character by means of blue and turquoise colors.

ABSTRACT (NATURAL) ENVIRONMENT SCHOOL

The name of this school is based on the work of artists who have taken inspiration from natural or environmental elements, but have then transformed them into something abstract. The artists Jasim Zaini is at the top of this group. He has attempted to make use of such raw materials as wood, plaster, nails, copper, head's boxes, stones, glass, and aluminum. We can see something special in the form of faded color in his painting, "Qatar's National Museum." Here, the copper serves the idea of the plotter's box and also copper nails, in creating the people's atmosphere rich in original and local Islamic decoration. In his painting, "Arrival to the Moon," he used aluminum and then dipped it with blue color as the conductor from earth to sky.

Salman al-Maliki has also developed this kind of art, as he has taken direct colors and flat materials as important elements of his work. Perhaps his background as a professional in the newspaper business has given his work their particular quality of the background elements mixing with the foreground to form an abstract symphony of color.

The sculptor Sayf al-Kawari also joins in this school, making sculpture of a very abstract character, far from his own personality. In order to be in harmony with the artistic logic in this school, we have found woman as the principal element in his sculpture, but it is abstract in character, far from realistic in outward appearance.

This school is also joined by two other artists, Faraj Dahham, with his surrealism and his abstract colors by modeling his surfaces, and the artists 'Adb Allah Dasmal, who benefits from the material of stage decoration in his works, especially in the distribution of light to figures in painting. This school is also followed by female artists Badriyyah Jasem in her natural abstractions.

ABSTRACT SCHOOL

This school was established by some artists after they have made individual experiences. But the modern idea followed by the Department of Art at the University resulted in two female artists who especially follow this style, particularly female artist Wafa' al-Hamd. She relies upon Arabic and Islamic decoration as the main elements of her creation by inserting Arabic script from the point of abstract, especially Featherly's abstract. What distinguishes her experiment from other's is the Arab ingredient and the clear sincerity of her works. This is due to the long period which is spent by the artist in completing this kind of painting. She bases her designs on circles, squares, and details of these two compositions of geometrical designs, which are the basis of Islamic art. This kind of art is transformed by the art of al-krafiki, especially in two colors, white and black, and their movement in the middle and the edges of the painting.

She was followed by female artist Badriyyah al-Kabisi, who began her study in the Open Studio and was dependent on its patterns and models. However, her studies in the University were freer, and she began to create her own abstract decorative designs which are against the modern trend. Her dependence on primary color and its relationship with other primary colors is the main focus of her final works, especially with regard to the use of Arabic script and abstract designs.

Natural Impressionism School

This style is clearly seen in the works of the artist Hasan al-Mala, one of the pioneers in the plastic arts in Qatar. He studied at the At Academy in Baghdad. However, after long experience with design and color, he refused imitating and following the classical patterns. So he has followed the spontaneous and natural designs in color and form. Therefore, we find anatomical exaggeration in the figures in many of his works. We can also see exaggeration in colors and other visual details. His work, "The Thirsty," depicts the suffering of a Qatari sailor, who is yearning for fresh water. It is widely known that fresh drinking water is very scarce on the sea. Therefore, we can find in this artist's work a natural character, especially in depicting the face and shoulder.

Translated from the Arabic by Drs. Aliudin Mahjudin, MA

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