

Future imaginary



Cities Unbuilt, collage by artist Karen Mirza

Karen Mirza
 I sit with a blank sheet of paper in front of me with the title 'Future Imaginary'. In fact, in my time it is not paper but a computer screen, a surface from which I can go from page to page. Open another browser and be in a totally different context,

surface, space, encounter with the World Wide Web. What has this enabled for my future imagining? I ask this question not as a critical engagement with what the internet has enabled but in order to question my abilities to imagine. The Museum of Non Participation has come out of a desire to do, see and imagine differently.

An attempt to unpack the complex now of the present tense

in a globalised centre that has age old divisions, inequalities and hierarchies at its core. I find myself asking how and what can I resist? I address this through the domain of contemporary art where the social and the political converge with the aesthetic. Art for me is a space in which all fields can be re-imagined.

I can here be the keys of the key-board from the other me that is

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The case of Karachi

Young romance blooms in the parks and beaches of the city



Boundary wall intervention Karachi, photographer Brad Butler

Arif Hasan

Changes in the lifestyles of the elite and middle classes in the cities of the South are all too visible; new cars, designer boutiques, fast food

outlets, malls, expensive cafes, posh schools and universities in the private sector and advertisements promoting consumerism. Karachi is no exception. However, the changes in the social values and lifestyles of the lower and lower middle classes are hidden away in informal settlements and peri-urban apartment complexes. The most visible public expression of the change that has taken place in

these classes is the emergence of young couples sitting with their arms around each other on the benches of parks and beaches in the city sometimes lying in each other's laps.

This behaviour is surprisingly tolerated by the other visitors to the parks and has led in some cases to the segregation of spaces between families, male visitors and couples. Fifteen years ago, this behaviour could not even be

conceived of. The police would have arrested the couple and visitors to the public space would have manhandled them. One has to belong to the South-Asian society in which I grew up to appreciate the importance of this change and its repercussions on social values and family structure. In my view something very fundamental has happened. In an attempt to understand this phenomenon and its causes,

I have between 2000 and 2006 interviewed or had a questionnaire completed by 100 young couples in parks and at the beach. Of the 100 couples 28 were married. Of the women 32 covered their heads and an additional 21 wore a grey or black abba (a loose outer garment). Only 10 couples were interested in politics and/or read political news in the newspapers.

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Behind the Barbers shop

LA TAA'LUQI KA AAJAIB GHAR



Photographer, Brad Butler

Larne Abse Gogarty

By chance, term two of the Urdu/English language exchange came to be held behind Yaseen Hairdressers, a Bethnal Green barber's shop. During a location-scouting walk after the classes ceased at Oxford House, we paused and peered into a window decorated with pillarbox red stickers of scissors and combs. Mohammad, a participant in the first round of Urdu/English classes also happened to be a barber, and worked at Yaseen between trips home to Lahore. He stepped out to greet us, inviting us in for chai. We sat at the back while several customers chatted in Urdu and English accompanied by the buzz of hair clippers. Our chai appeared after an alchemical process involving water from the shower being heated in a microwave until blisteringly hot and infused with copious amounts of sugar. We discussed the problems we'd had in locating a space for the new term and Mohammad mentioned that the room behind the barbers was empty. We didn't hesitate in chipping up the landlord.

weeks progressed, the walls became increasingly plastered in our teacher Hasan's translations.

How are you? Goodbye Thank you
 -Aap kessi hain?
 -Ghuda-hafez
 -Shukria.

Different people came, bringing their own experiences and languages; Nepali, Hindi, Arabic, Polish, German, Punjabi, Japanese, Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish. As Hasan said, "It was amazing to see the outcomes and feedback to the classes when you have a mixture of people from different ethnicities, age groups, education levels, and work backgrounds. For example, we had artists, charity workers, dry cleaners, a yoga teacher and barbers all together. This led to interesting conversations and experiences, as everyone's way of thinking was different". For two hours each Monday we learnt vocabulary and grammar and strayed into discussions on gender, terrorism, religion, politics language, football and food; topics that rose out of translations, tangential to the language. The space given over to these subjects was unusual for a language class, and helped to build interesting group dynamics and friendships. We all got to know each other a little and enjoyed a meal at Tayyabs together at the end of the course, practising our Urdu over mango lassis and lamb chops.

Issues of translation were central to the class, and The Museum of Non Participation as a whole. We discussed the shifts in meaning that occur to words once ensconced in another language.

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Preface to a history of The Museum of Non Participation

Pancho Villa

"We know enough to make up lies which are convincing, but we also have the skill, when we will, to speak the truth." (The Muses to Hesiod, Hesiod, Theogony 23).

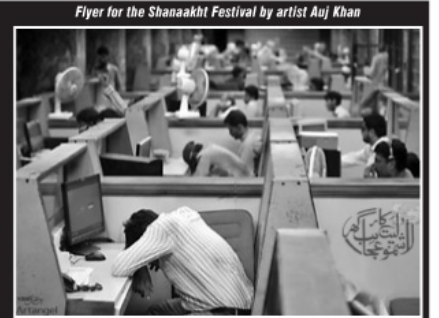
What is The Museum of Non Participation? Does it have a mission, and collections? Is it an enigma, a paradox, or a joke? Might it be all these and more, or simply one more art-world folly competing for attention? Do its founders ask serious questions, or question seriousness? Is it disinterested or complicity in disguise? Is its title a misnomer? Many questions confront this project; perhaps that is its purpose, because in querying it we are forced to interrogate the boundaries of participation and museums.

Museums are respectable institutions charged with the preservation, interpretation and display of objects. They are good places to visit while on holiday, or on rainy days out with the kids. We rarely stop to question them. Perhaps it is the combination of well-trained smiles emitted from visitor-enquiry desks, the lure of gift shops, proffering ersatz antiques and the bottled Lethe water sold in air-conditioned cafes that makes museums feel so comfortable and cuddly, and encourages us to avert our eyes from the

violence, both mythical and real, that lies at their foundation. After all, who would want to hear the hapless soldier's sigh that runs in blood down palace walls whilst trying to grab a bit of culture on a Sunday afternoon?

But our museums are far from innocent; they are at best a bloody pirate's treasure trove. So why not question them? After all, it would be comforting to know that the previous owner of a painting that we so admire had not perished in a gas-chamber, or that the wonderful display of marble sculptures in gallery X hadn't been nicked by an upstart ambassador and bequeathed to the Nation in exchange for some ignoble honour. But even after pushing aside the violence of plunder, our museums still confront us with successive layers of brutality disguised as culture. There is: the violence of restoration, which has erased so many works of art; the violence of sacrilege that denies the religious significance of countless curated objects; the violence of professional discourse that coopts the initiated and intimidates the uninitiated; and the violence of desecration, which haunts so many living peoples. Then, lest we forget, there is the plagiaristic violence perpetrated by a Frankenstein monster that, with the heart of a rebel and the hands of a colonial despot, calls itself, in true military fashion, the avant-garde.

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Managing a race without a lever

Naem Sadiq

As if advertising a new maternity service, the president declared in his opening remarks in Washington: "My democracy will deliver". The fact is that Pakistan has crossed the threshold and now neither any one's personal brand of democracy nor any general brand of dictatorship is likely to deliver anymore. We cannot even hope to come out of what we have allowed ourselves to get into - without scars that shall define our being for a long time to come.

Pakistan faces three major problems. Its army is engaged in a massive war with a barbaric group of militants who are invading parts of the country and forcing the population to choose between getting butchered or adopting their perverted values of the Islamic-Jahiliyyah model. In the United States, our pro-terror partner in the war against terrorism. The United States has succeeded in influencing and penetrating our leadership and converting them into bonded labour by selective application of 'doles and loans'. Finally we have a colossal human tragedy as some 1.2 million people are deprived of their homes, jobs and dignity. They are forced to vacate their homes and go elsewhere to beg for shelter, food and survival. The scale, severity and complexity of these events are far greater in magnitude than most Pakistanis have even begun to realize. Regardless of what may be the final outcome of these events, Pakistan would have changed forever. It will no longer be 'business as usual'. There is much to suggest that it could implode and fragment, making it possible for the Taliban, Awami and the world at large to choose the most desirable pieces of this dysfunctional state. There are also those who believe in miracles and suggest that if we agree to radically change the structure of our state and its elite, we will have a reasonable chance of becoming a more caring, just and people-friendly society. This however is no longer possible through symbolic candlelight vigils, green flags, inviting the Imam-Koala or press club protests. The time for attacking the symptoms, and that too halfheartedly is over.

The government of Pakistan reacted with shock and surprise when President Obama made a very simple statement: "The government of Pakistan does not seem to have the capacity to deliver basic services: schools, healthcare, rule of law and a judicial system that works for the majority of the people." This was to be discovered and every sensible Pakistani had long been saying the same thing. Any state that only serves itself and its two percent elite through a system of mutual bribes and becomes completely irrelevant to the majority of its citizens is very likely to be replaced by alternate forces.

We are in the midst of a major war. The 100 odd ministers and advisers who float the traffic rules in their unregistered bullet proof Privos give any signs that they represent a country at war - a country that is one of the poorest amongst the richest and whose leaders carry a begging bowl as an integral item of their daily dress code. Could this job not be done by ten good souls driving in plain cars. Suzuki and stopping at every traffic light? Does the literacy of our globe trotting president even suggest that he should be at war? As the country fights a painful war of survival, a profoundly inconsiderate president takes off on a ten-day private visit hopping from one capital to another. Till March 2009, his visits had already cost a whopping 157.257 million dollars.

The chief justice has been restored. The ordinary citizens are not really interested in how many ceremonial grants of honour he receives every week. He has avoided touching the core issue of justice in Pakistan - the issue that no one is above the law and that the NIO is an illegal document. He has not taken a suo moto notice of the killing of three Baloch leaders. He has neither summoned President Musharraf for violating the constitution nor sacked the judges for taking oath on the PCO. So is it justice in Pakistan?

For sixty long years, Pakistan has been ruled by a state that is least concerned or interested in its ordinary citizens. It consists of and serves only the interests of a small, rich, wasteful, opulent, pampered and law-breaking elite. It may have few taxes and no rules. They are the new breed of well-tressed militants. They carry unlicensed weapons, unregistered vehicles, private guards and often foreign passports. Even when 1.2 million Malakand refugees struggle for every morsel of food, they do not seem to care. The NIO could not be altered by its title as a single bottle of mineral water.

Unless this skewed and blatant disparity is considerably reduced and its pampered lawless elite is willing to be a part of a more just and equitable society, the NIO will not be altered. It will not be the Taliban-intended destination of the world nor reform this dysfunctional state right now, there will soon be no state to reform.

The writer is a civil society activist, naemsadiq@gmail.com

The emergence of a people sensitive judiciary

Faisal Siddiqi Advocate

Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani, Chairman Senate Parooz H Naek, Speaker National Assembly Dr Faruq Ahmad Mirza, federal ministers, Supreme Court judges, services' chiefs, chairman joint chiefs of staff, parliamentarians and senior government officials attended the dinner. However, none of the restored judges, including the Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, attended the dinner despite invitations. Justice Iftikhar paid 12-hour visit to central prison. He took notice of the substandard food being provided by the canteen and kitchen management and ordered to cancel the contract of food staff suppliers.

The Lawyers Movement and the judicial reform which began on March 9th, 2007, is a phenomenon which has elicited extreme responses. One school of thought, I would call the 'romantics', saw the lawyers movement as a social revolutionary movement having the revolutionary potential to restructure the executive in Pakistan. Another school of thought, I would call the 'jyala politico's', saw the lawyers movement as a reactionary movement having the potential of judicial despotism which would be used by the rightwing and the anti-democratic forces to sabotage the process of liberal democracy in Pakistan. Without going into a detailed

judicial supremacy and monopoly in areas of constitutional and legal interpretation. Secondly the institutional power of the judiciary to resolve actual disputes involving various governmental, political and private actors. In this world, the institutional framework of dispute resolution is the judicial institution, whether the dispute is between the prime minister and the chief of army staff or between the government and a common citizen. With such structural and institutional power, why is the judiciary being so weak and so executive oriented and dominated? The answer is simple: these constitutional powers of the judiciary, in a weak and transitional constitutional system like Pakistan, are in reality powers only on paper. The political executive has the coercive power of the police and bureaucratic establishment, the army has the coercive power of its soldiers and the military bureaucratic establishment, but in essence, the judiciary only has the power to pass orders. It has no coercive institutional power to implement its orders or restrain the political and military elite from dismissing independent minded judges.

A judicial institution independent on paper constitutionally but dependent in reality on the executive is the problem to which the lawyers movement and the judicial reform seeks to provide a tentative (not conclusive) answer. The answer was found in developing the mobilization power of the judicial institution to support its structural

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being fed to the media and publishing in the jails of Pakistan and is declining dinner invitations from the executive.

Faisal Siddiqi is an advocate based in Karachi.



Offending Images

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler

How to make Art in a dictatorship was a topic debated during Musharraf's tenure by artists in Pakistan. Inspired by an article of the same title (Nagori, 2008) they asked: Does the declaration of martial law powerfully override the relevance of Art? As lawyers protest on the street what is the role of Art? During martial law can Art afford to ignore Politics?

These questions echo a long struggle in the relationship between Art and politics, between inside and outside of privilege and a wandering frontier of personal responsibility. Avant Garde artists, after all, have long understood that to stake a place in 'revolutionary history' there is nothing like provoking a riot, an assault on propriety in the guise of art. Short of committing a real crime by killing innocent persons-by with a bomb, the pitiless contemporary art of the twentieth century attacks symbols, the very meaning of a 'pitiful' art as assimilated to 'academism'. Take Guy Debord, the French Situationist, as an example. In 1952, speaking about his film Without Images, which mounted a defence of the Marquis de Sade, Debord claimed he wanted to kill the cinema 'because it was easier than killing a passer-by' (Virilio 2003). Compare this with the well known anecdote about Picasso's 'Guernica', painted after the intense bombing of a Spanish town by the same name in 1937. It is said that a German officer visited Picasso in his Paris studio in 1937 during the Second World War. There he saw 'Guernica', and shocked at the modernist chaos of the canvas, he asked the artist, 'What is this? Picasso replied, 'No you did this!'

What is at stake here? If we are to believe left wing authors such as Zizek, Art is an opportunity to 'change the topic'. This he presents to us through an old joke about a husband who returns home earlier than usual from work and finds his wife in bed with another man. The surprised wife exclaims: 'Why have you come back early?' The husband furiously replies back: 'What are you doing in bed with another man?' The wife calmly replies: I asked you a question first - don't try to squeeze out of it by changing the topic! Zizek goes on to argue that the same goes for violence - that the task is to change the topic, to move from the desperate call to 'stop violence' and address the root causes, in particular 'systemic violence' or 'established violence'.

What is brought to mind here is a recent event in Pakistan when the Shantakhi Festival was violently smashed up after a visitor took offence to an artist's image. The artist was forced to flee the country, the organisers received personal threats and the democratically elected government of Pakistan defended the violent vigilante. We do not need to go into the where and why of this particular image or context. Instead, let us change the debate to raise valuable questions that such a situation might produce. What is the relationship of freedom of expression to democracy? What is the role of the image in our society? How and where does one resist? Is it better to remain silent? If so, what are the politics of human silence? How do we differentiate between Violence in Art, Violence in Art and the Violence of Art? And as our work was also in this festival, what is our personal relationship to this violence?

More widely, feeling our own powerlessness over this violence and the violence in Pakistan in general, what first came to our minds was Jean Luc Godard's position in Chris Marker's protest documentary of 1967 'Loi Du Vietnam'. Denied permission to travel to Vietnam to film the war, Godard resolves to take up his fight at the level of the image. He promised to mention 'Vietnam' in every film he would henceforth make. He too changes the debate, stating that "...we should not be asking what we can do for the Vietnamese; we should be asking what the Vietnamese can do for us". We can apply this to Pakistan. Rather than seeing Pakistan as a distant crisis, we should see it as the flip side of our own crisis, a link of our own violent system. This is what I take Vito Accardo to mean when he set out his instructions for making an artwork: 'Find yourself in a position of crisis, make your work from there.' The fundamental truth is, of course, that violence hurts. In this case it has deeply hurt a well-meaning artist, honest organizers, an otherwise excellent festival and the reputation of Karachi; a city that contains some of the most hospitable people in the world. The real missed opportunity is that this debate could easily have been peaceful and progressive if the offended party had simply asked for the image in question to be removed. As both the artist and the organizers are interested in discussion and debate (and not provoking violence) they would happily have complied with such a simple request. The endemic issue at stake is why they were never given that opportunity.

www.vaslat.org
Your doorway to all art from Pakistan.
The text above was dictated to John Phillips in a dream by someone claiming to be Pancho Villa

Future Imaginary

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sitting in another space at the same time. I can hear the sound of a mechanical machine in the background that I imagine to be a grass cutter. In the foreground, a blade cutting grass, the space of the outside feels much larger and the reflective sounds that map the echo are in stark contrast to the close up sounds of the leaf that reflect a much smaller contained space. I have just been interrupted by my other self and asked if I was writing too, this is an interesting experience to take their presence of the two selves constructing words on a page from two very different positions, a splitting of the self.

New centres of economic power have emerged post the Second World War in India, China, Dubai asking in turn of all of us to consider the many new relations of production, consumption, and property relations. The collapse of the left in a post 1989 world left an unchallenged capitalism to rage the planet un fettered in its thoughts and actions.

Tourists become targets as Dubai's workers take revolt to the beaches. Labourers angered by low pay and long hours are preparing to take their protest into the luxury malls they built. The city of the Captive Globe.....is the capital of God, where science, art, poetry and forms of madness compete under ideal conditions to invent, destroy and restore the world of phenomenal reality.

.....Manhattan is the product of an unarticulated theory, a plan of creation, whose program (s) to exist in a world totally fabricated by man, to live inside fantasy.....The entire city became a factory of manmade experiences, where the real and natural cease to exist.

Our word 'museum' is a sham. The Museion (Greek) Museum (Latin) was the temple of the Muses, goddesses of creativity and daughters of Memory. Their house was a place for contemplation, and debate, the preservation of ideas, creation of poetry and playing music. The idea of a 'museum' as repository of acquisitions is an adjunct to colonialism.

Participation's desire 'to swim against the grain'. Its collection of metaphors and actions are available for reinterpretation by anyone at anytime. It is a museum of values not of objects, a museum of ideas that principles of 'copyleft', not copyright - a museum predicated on the idea that its collection will grow only by giving them away. Memory is a distortion of her purpose, which is to aid us in imagining our future.

In this new paradigm of the pre modern, post modern, post medium, post colonial, altermodern I wonder what will be the work of art? I imagine the work of art as indeterminate, contingent, plural. It resides in the conceptualizing of constructing, embodying into taking notice of their plight.

On my second trip to Pakistan my collaborative partner Brad Butler and I organized a talk by the eminent architect and activist Arif Hasan on the evolution of Karachi. Hasan began his seminar with Karachi as a fishing village. 'Pre British Karachi' he then went on to cite the names that Karachi has had over the years, the geographical significance of the port, the events, wars, changing demographics and the city since 1759.

Thus: Chinga to Madra! Chingamos a los chingamos, hijos de la chingada, quon non binarum in chingado. The Museum of Non Participation. Like the final lines of the first Dada manifesto- 'If you disagree with this manifesto you are a Democrat. It appears to be a paradox. Personally I refuse to take part and consider this museum mis-named, better that we call it the Museum of countless 'third world' cities. Awkward Buggers, or the Museum of non-participation. Whatever it turns out to be, don't expect to find me dead in it. Pancho Villa

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one in this camp, not just the people in this room. They are actively looking for us', he tells me. The construction workers, packed together inside their hut in one of the shanty towns, are breaking the most fundamental of all the draconian laws governing immigrants within the United Arab Emirates - they are holding a union meeting, a practice that is banned in all but one of the Gulf States.

They are also plotting their next move in protest at their treatment by their Arab employers who, they claim, exploit them for cheap labour. It's a move that will, for the first time, involve direct confrontation with the millions of tourists who visit the city every year. They plan to shame foreigners into taking notice of their plight.

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Preface to a history of The Museum of Non Participation

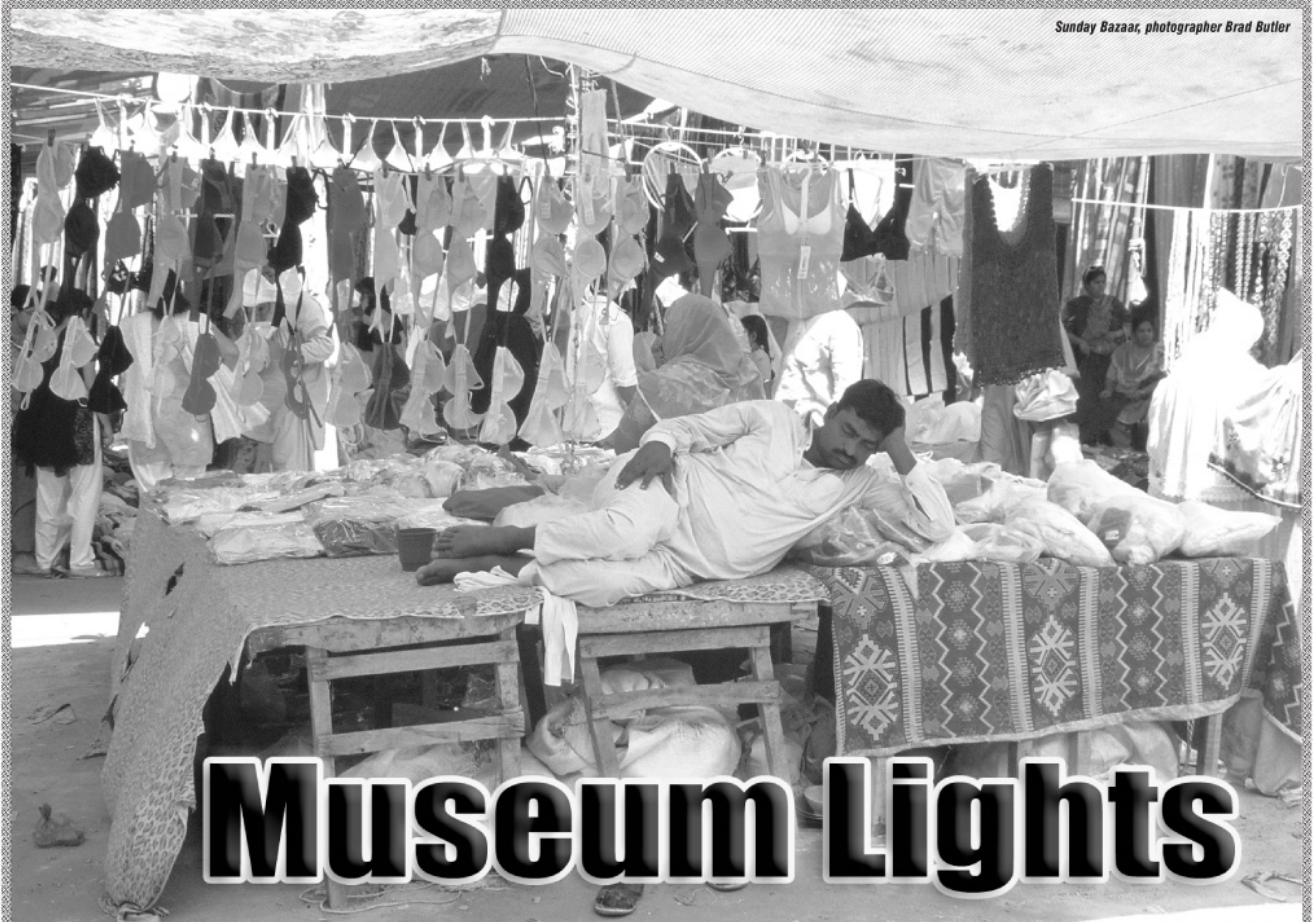
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And of course there is the violence of denial implicit in all interpretation. Europe possesses no word to fully express its cruelty, but Mexican Spanish does. It is a word that evokes the Conquest, and the wealth that flooded Seville and drained into the coffers of Italian renaissance banks.

It is a word with countless facets; whole sentences can be constructed by manipulating its inflections. It favours everyday speech with bile. The word is Chinga. It means fuck, rape, destruction, pillage, hopelessness, despair and theft. It evokes a mythical time and place in Chingado, the rape of mother earth - which in European parlance connotes the 'discovery of the New World'.

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Sunday Bazaar, photographer Brad Butler



Museum Lights

Auj A. Khan

Pervez is from Paisalabad and Karachi is a very big city. It has been hot all day and it is 10 pm on Shara e Paisal and there is no electricity. As Pervez walks towards Gora Kalristan he meets no woman but a man who

is a woman but he/she can't help him. He needs the bus ticket to Haidari. He asks him/her "Haidari ki bus kounse hai?" On his cell he listens to the sweet voiced presenter on FM 100 "Shahar main roshniyan bohat hai, jab roshniyon ka shahar hai?" Goes further close to the fly-over across the big hole in the middle. The black blocks of buildings remind him of dark hills he sees

on his way to Chakwal but in Karachi these hills have no animals - only small lights that flicker sometimes. Pervez learnt how to read and write in Urdu and some English when he was a small man. As cars flash by he tries hard to read for clues, on walls, up above and sometimes the faces. The wall read "The Light of Shabeel Benzair is still with us" and close by a faded phone number for the "English Generator

Service, Saddar, Karachi". "Haidari ki bus kounse hai?" he throws it at the man in grey shahwar kameez. "I know Saddar wali, Haidari I have only heard, not seen". In Karachi Pervez only hears the birds above and now it's dark and there are no birds - no crows and no engines. He does not want to see any faces and he does not want to see the hills. He is looking for

Haidari. He does not ask anyone and not the red-eyed police men who look at him with a smile and not a frown. As Pervez crosses the road he hears the bus and the car sham very hard and people who are crying and laughing and some watching. He looks for Haidari to be found written on the bus but there are only busy people, people making noise and he walks past them leaving them all behind.

Roshniyan kafi hai yahan - Karachi ki roshniyan hain behal... "Bey gawe Haidari jayenge?" "Nahi, yag gari Malver ki hai" "Lekin mainay Haidari jana hai - Haidari..." "Gold Leaf Lights, Capstan, Red and White, ya pan?" asks the little boy who Pervez cannot stand as he can't help him. And Pervez doesn't smoke and he doesn't like pan.

"Kabhi say ho tum?" Pervez asks. "Mirawali say" says the little boy. Two cars slam in front of him and there is too much light at once and Pervez can't see the boy anymore. Pervez sees two men holding hands, deep in discussion and wonders if they are from Haidari or will go to Haidari from here. He looks at the Allah wala monument and tries to remember the way back to Haidari.

He watches the two men as they go near the lights and he follows them but they disappear as the lights shut down again. The bus comes with many lights inside and outside and Pervez forgets. He forgets about the men, about the little boy, about the Allah wala monument and is looking at the lights... The writer is an artist based in Karachi.

The case of Karachi

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Eighty-three had discussed among themselves about the advantages of migrating to another country. The majority of women felt uncomfortable at the idea. The reasons for wanting to migrate were in order of importance; one, there was no justice in Pakistan, to get by you needed connections or money to hand out bribes; two, they would never be able to own a place to live or to rent a proper home; three, married couples were afraid that they would not be able to educate their children properly as good education was too expensive; four, there was no affordable entertainment and recreation except TV; five, there were too many family disputes often related to behaviour patterns of the young which they considered hypocritical; and six, they lived, worked and travelled in terrible environmental conditions. There is a considerable difference between the interviews of 2000-2002 and those taken in 2006. In the earlier interviews, the couples were apologetic of their relationship, showed deference to the wishes of their elders and reported incidents of police harassment. In the later interviews the couples are confident, critical of society and politics and say that the police do not harass them. I decided to ask the visitors to the parks and beaches what they felt about the "terrible" behaviour of the couples. Thirty persons were asked this question. Eleven strongly disapproved for social and religious reasons and felt that there should be a ban on such behaviour. Five even felt that there should be no "dating" between unmarried persons. However, they expressed their inability to do anything about it. Ten persons felt that this was bad for the younger generation although they had no problems with "dating" as such. Nine persons saw nothing wrong with it as long as it was kept to a "certain level". The level could not be defined.

It is important to understand what has brought about this very visible change apart from TV and the "trickle down" of the lifestyles of the more affluent sections of society. I feel that one of the reasons is that for the first time in our history we have a very large number of unmarried adolescents. The low income settlements that I knew in the 70's and 80's have changed. Then they were purely working class and women by and large did not have formal jobs. Today, they contain doctors, engineers, formal sector entrepreneurs, persons employed in the corporate and IT sectors, bank managers, college and school teachers (over 80 per cent of them women), although the majority population is still working class. There is general agreement that the major change that has taken place is the break-up of the extended or joint family. Among the reasons given is that previously there was one earning member and others were dependents. Today there are many earning members (otherwise the kitchen cannot function) and hence the patriarchal family structure cannot survive. Money from abroad was also cited as a reason for the break-up of the family since it created jealousy in the extended family and the nuclear family of the person sending it broke away from the rest. In addition, working women have also adversely affected the joint family system for it has led to quarrels and disputes around family honour and traditional values. Marriages are increasingly taking place outside of the clan and this further fragments the extended family. Another interesting cause for greater freedoms mentioned is that the father is seldom absent at home. This is because of three reasons. One, the low income families live far from their places of work. The father leaves early and comes home very late. Two, the house is congested often, 8 to 10 people in

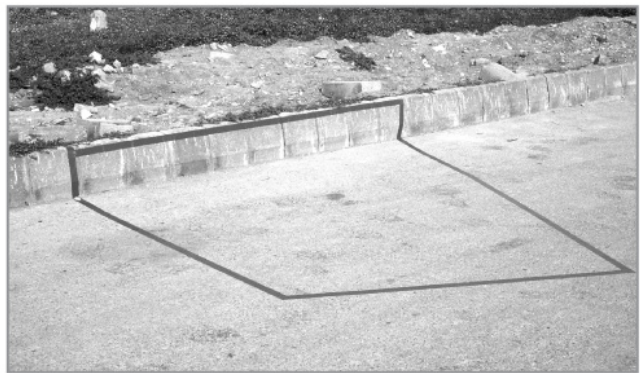
two rooms. The mother leaves a sigh of relief when people step away. And three, everyone is too busy since almost everyone works. It was also mentioned that people were not conscious of the changes that have taken place and as a result are a bit confused. One person reported how he agreed to let his daughter marry out of his caste and how he was terrified of what the reaction of his clan would be. However, there was no reaction except for a few elders being sarcastic his peers did not participate. The traditions are gone but we do not know it for out of fear we do not discuss these things" was his conclusion. The above discussion points to the fact that if left alone, we would have a very different society in Karachi in the next decade. For the older and the younger generation it will be a painful experience. However, a retrogressive political revolution can roll back the changes that have taken place in behaviour patterns and the use of public space. To consolidate the changes that have been described above through a less difficult and painful process an understanding between tradition and the new social reality is important. This can only happen through the development of an appropriate state culture which promotes new societal values through education and the media. This means a change in the curriculum of educational institutions (especially primary and middle schools); the development of affordable skill based intermediate education and the promotion of affordable entertainment, recreation and cultural activity. This also points to the development of corresponding changes in the curriculum of education and programmes. How this is to be done and who will consciously promote these changes has yet to be discussed.

The writer is an architect based in Karachi

Beyond the Boundary Wall

Karen Mirza

In Karachi there are whole areas of the city that are called Defence. Defence phase one, Defence phase two up to Defence phase eight. These are areas of visible wealth proportionate perhaps to the height of the boundary walls that surround each property. These walls are certainly there for defence: a reassurance in the face of fear and insecurity, but in a city where so much of the jollies in the everyday is sited in public areas, these boundary walls are also statements of intent. Protecting the elite from potential violence or harm, these walls also prevent their inhabitants from actively being able to look out and engage. When I use the term looking, I mean that to look is to do something more deliberate than seeing; it is a state of heightened awareness. In many areas of Karachi the public walls are covered in graffiti of political slogans and advertisements. During the height of the lawyers' movement there appeared the word bol - meaning 'speak out' and chalo - 'let's go'. In Urdu there are political slogans: 'every voter is yours only, join our march ahead'; we are all with you, desertation towards the prophet means open war for the muslims; 'let's go'. But these slogans are not on the walls in Defence, at least not in any number like elsewhere. In a city without a view of modern art, one starts to miss the city itself as the museum. But what does the delineation of boundaries say? Is this The Museum of Non Participation? This is at least a term that could be debated by the people living in Defence who



Tapo drawing, Karachi by artist Karen Mirza. (Below) Source: military pamphlet, UK.

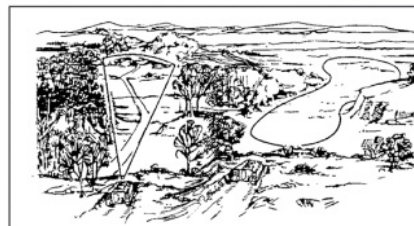


Figure 1-16. Sectors of Fire.

are highly literate, opinionated and educated. Behind the walls are the consumers and producers of art in the city a replication of the commerce of exchange of ideas played out inside the white walls of Western art institutions across the world; walls where the value of property inside is proportional to the struggle of those who are outside. The real war in Pakistan is not about religion, but about systemic violence and the contemporary art within the white walls of the gallery no longer wants to respond to the excess of commodities and signs but to a lack of connections, contemporary art, sure, but contemporary with what?

