

# Media Art in Pakistan

## Not just another “in your face” advertisement campaign!

Kara film festival, “Cloud 89” radio talk show, “George ka Pakistan” reality tv series, <http://irtaqa.deviantart.com/>, truck art, haikus in urdu, the “gulabo” fashion collection, videos for “khamaj” and “na re na”, “Yaar di ghar



### Introduction

Spurts of contemporary creativity show that the seeds of media art have taken root in our society as it becomes slave to technology and capitalist culture. A strategy is suggested so that the use of media for arts provides an alternative to product marketing which is its main function now



### Pakistan Now

- Emerged from **suppressive** political environment
- **Computer science** graduates with no background in the arts
- Growing consumer society especially for **telecommunication**
- Billboards have become a **menace**



### The Art Scene

- Museums are **outdated**
- Art critics realize need for historical narrative that stems from our **roots** not Western Ideals
- **Folk art** is the oldest form of media art in Pakistan, for centuries people have been wearing their art, moving around and eating in it
- Computer generated art is not discussed as **mainstream** art
- **Foreign** consulates like Japan, France, Italy are active in creating collaborations and interactions between their artists and Pakistan's
- Galleries keep mostly art that **sells**
- Post Modernity did not enter **public discourse** due to more than a decade of censorship in the arts thus creating a void where contemporary theories should exist
- The Pakistani **rock music** scene has shown the most interesting developments with respect to successful integration of classical, eastern and modern, western sound.

### Copycat Culture

- Piracy can be linked to lack of **equal standards** for all
- Access to information can be compared to **upgraded education**
- Most Pakistanis cannot **afford** to buy original software
- Everything comes in either grade one (**original**) or grade two (**fake**) including medicines, toys and groceries, many pay for one but often get two
- This copycat culture should be understood when devising a **plan** to combat software piracy
- Public should be **informed** and educated in the use of open source software through large scale initiatives
- Marketing **research** needs to be conducted by software manufacturers and distributors to make products affordable to the average Pakistani

### Defining the Third World Media Artist

- This is the age of the **freelance** artist
- Does not have to wait to be **discovered** by others to publicly display art
- Does not show others lives as his/her own art, but works towards **empowering** the under-represented
- Work incorporates some form of **activism** in order to stand strong against the media for entertainment curse in an education-starved society
- Has **technical** and **aesthetic** skills
- Work stems from a **theoretical** base which can be articulated by the artist
- Does not need to know how to read or write but is an **expert** in his/her medium
- Creates work which can be understood at the **public** and **personal** level without waiting for interpretation from critics
- Can **create through** a new medium or use it to **project** traditional art

### The future for critics of media art in Pakistan

- Need to develop a **theoretical** framework which will allow links between old, new and international art.
- Like their inclusion of folk art in discussions on mainstream art techniques, critics need to understand and encourage the **tools** used for media art
- Media art should be seen as a **reflection** of our multifaceted society and not an insular pocket within it
- An **institute** for research in media art theories has to be set up
- Interaction and collaboration should be an inherent part of a Media artists' work **strategy**

Hasan Zaidi, [the Red Baron and Talha](#), George, Aliya Salahuddin, [Imran Ali Dina](#), [truck painters](#), Duriya Kazi, David Alesworth, [Fatima Suriya Bajija](#), [Maheen](#), Saqib Malik, [Abida Parveen](#), [Junaid Mumtaz](#), Raja Rana, [F](#)