

SEANKELLY

Omer, Eeshah. "Karachi Biennale's popular choice—'Disruption as Rapture,' *Daily Times*, November 10, 2017.

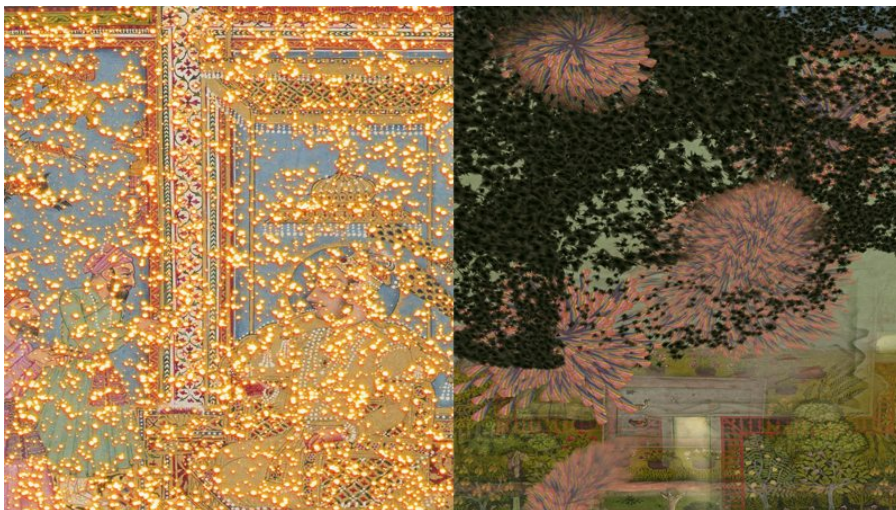
# Daily Times

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## Karachi Biennale's popular choice — 'Disruption as Rapture'



Biennales held all across the World (amounting to a physical sum prestige of over 100 cities so far) play an important role in connecting forlorn landscapes with their shrouded history of arts and culture in order to help build a more inspired and creative society, giving people a sense of who they are and where they've come from. The Karachi Biennale 2017 (KB17), a project of the Karachi Biennale Trust (KBT) comprising of a group of diligent curators, art educators and professional enthusiasts, drew to a close on Sunday after two weeks of art exhibits used to bring together diverse communities of the metropolis.



The Karachi Biennale 2017 (KB17) is Pakistan's largest international contemporary art event set to feature on a holistically large scale platform every two years in Karachi. Beginning this year on October 22, over 160 national and international artists from 34 countries around the globe responded to a common theme: WITNESS – seeking to engage the public by use of art as a lens to conceptualize the city and its concerns. Whether it was the performances at the Frere Hall, or visits to the 12 chosen venues turned into free and public art spaces across the city, the diverse audience of spectators was excited to be a part of a series of discursive sessions that helped them experience culture in an open, secure and engaging environment.

Amongst prominent names, famous Pakistani artist Masood Kothari played his role as the guest of honour, while CEO KB17 Niilofur Farrukh and Chief Curator Amin Gulgee rendered their services as part of the occasion.



Out of two prizes that accompanied the biennale to acknowledge the participating artists' outstanding works, the award for the KB17 Shahneela and Farhan Faruqi Popular Choice Art Prize went out to artist Shahzia Sikander for her work *Disruption as Rapture*, chosen by everyone who visited the 12 Biennale sites through popular vote. The award which included a specially designed trophy and cash prize of Rs 500,000 was announced at the closing ceremony at the Beach Luxury Lawns on November 5. For Ms Sikander, the honour has been greater in the fact that her work "spoke to people".

*'Embrace your imagination and make your voice heard, despite the odds. Persist in your efforts to make your mark on society, to transform societal norms, past the limitations of the art world'*

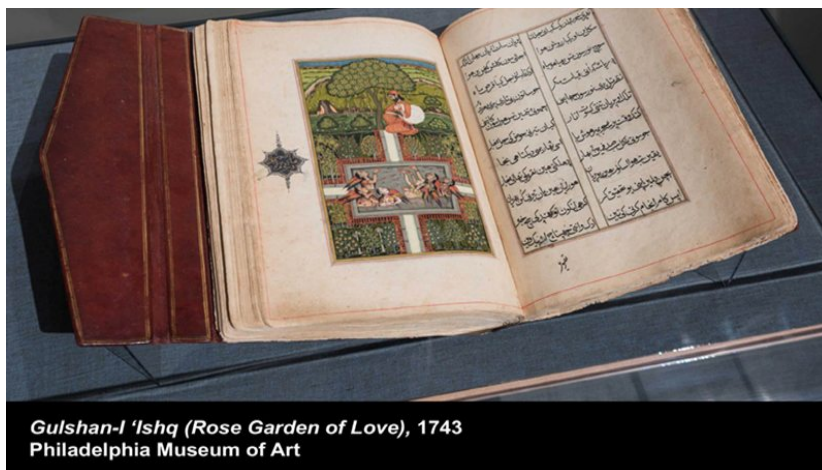
"I must thank the Philadelphia Art Museum that gave access to their historical manuscript 'Gulshan-e-Ishq' and to my longest collaborator Patrick O'Rourke and the composer of the score Du Yun and Ali Sethi for their inventive music and lyrics. Thank you to the curatorial team and the organisers of the Karachi Art Biennale to have provided a platform to show art. For me the honour was even more magical as this was the first time I was invited and my video animation work shown in Pakistan. And thank you to all of you who voted for it," she said.



The biennale is set to leave its mark on Karachi's public calendar in 2019 once again. For its next appearance, the biennale's theme and curator will be finalized, in the upcoming months. The Karachi Biennale this year offered the Karachi public an opportunity to enable their experiences as one and bring about a healthier, smarter and more cohesive society, sparking an emotional and intellectual difference in their lives. With much scope for continuing this endeavor in years to come, the KB17 organizers said, "Organizing an event at a scale that could reach out to the 20 million population of the city requires support, not only in terms of resources and finances, but also a conducive and encouraging environment."

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The KB17 trustees' long term commitments ensure that new performances, special events, exhibitions, awards, grants, lectures and access to works of arts can continue to reach an ever-growing audience – bringing art into the public domain, in the hope that such support is forthcoming from various stakeholders of the city and in ways that wouldn't be possible without its communities investments.



**Gulshan-I 'Ishq (Rose Garden of Love), 1743  
Philadelphia Museum of Art**

"I would like to dedicate this award to the young miniature painters coming out of Pakistan, to encourage them to experiment and think outside of the status quo. The link to miniature painting is deep, several centuries of diverse tradition and there are many ways to expand on it. Embrace your imagination and make your voice heard, despite the odds. Persist in your efforts to make your mark on society, to transform societal norms, past the limitations of the art world. Imagination connects the past, to the present, to the future," Ms Sikander concluded.