

Tribune Annem Zaidi: The self-reflective artist

Share Tweet

Annem Zaidi: The self-reflective artist

The artist continues to garner attention due to her depiction of womanly desires through faceless creations.

By Momina Sibtain

Published: August 11, 2013

64SHARES

Share Tweet Email

LAHORE: An artist's work is more or less like a mirror that reflects the soul, thoughts, ideologies, passion and even fear, to some extent. The same can also probably be said for Pakistan's emerging talent, Annem Zaidi, whose work is bold but definitive, depicting a woman's inner desires.

Zaidi, who is a graduate of the National College of Arts, one of the two renowned art colleges in the country, has created quite a stir with her work. Not having her father for most of her life, she feels that her sense of longing has subconsciously crept into her work.

"My work is contemporary figurative and not conventional at the same time," says Zaidi. "It deals with the female persona as a bridge between one's outer and inner worlds in order to help one see their interconnections." Focusing more on the essence of a woman's identity resonating from her posture, the artist likes to create the concept of a character without ever showing its face.

"Females are innately dramatic," says Zaidi. "I try to encapsulate that, I add drama to my work by way of body language and since I photograph my subjects, that adds even more emotion to the piece." Often people make the mistake of viewing and classifying Zaidi's work as monochromatic. However, her intriguing depiction of the self has tones of sepia and others subtly embedded within the canvas, if one only looks into it closely.

Zaidi speaks candidly about her experience at NCA. While she admits that she has become what she is today because of her alma mater, she feels that it wasn't much of a learning process. Maybe one can say that the institute helped her 'unlearn' so that she could discover her own talent.

"I never took it seriously because as an artist I cannot work under pressure. I need to let my mood set the tone of my work," elaborates Zaidi. "There is a lot of favouritism at the college and that can be discouraging. I only worked for my thesis and the kind of art that I am doing now is something which I have taught myself. The only great thing about NCA was that it gave you freedom to do what you wanted to do, but as far as skill goes I don't think I picked up much."

Zaidi has been doing rounds both nationally and internationally thanks to her immaculate artistic skills. She recently visited Malaysia for a residency at East Coast Artist in Residence, in Quantun. Talking about her experience in Malaysia, she shares, "I could not sleep for 3 weeks while I was there. There were far too many insects and I was just too fearful to be able to work in peace." However, despite the odds and only 21 days at the residency, Zaidi managed to up a great show at a gallery in Kuala Lumpur, which also led to a greater opportunity.

While in Malaysia, Zaidi received an email from the Global Art Agency. "They host art exhibits all over the world and their upcoming show is in Vienna," explains an excited Zaidi. "They want me to showcase my work at the Vienna Showcase this year. There will be 150 artists showcasing with leading gallerists and collectors attending the event and I am super excited. I think international exposure is really good and puts things into perspective for younger artists."

With a couple of group shows and a residency under her belt, Zaidi is currently gearing up for her first solo show in Pakistan at the Taseer Art Gallery in Lahore (formerly known as The Drawing Room Art Gallery).

Published in The Express Tribune, August 12th, 2013.