

An abstract painting featuring a central figure rendered in shades of blue and dark tones. The figure is set against a light blue background with vertical streaks of red and white. The overall style is expressive and gestural.

PAKISTAN

2011-15

SUSANNE HUSEMANN
PAINTINGS

PAKISTAN

Paintings by
Susanne Husemann

Impressum

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Birds, oil on canvas, 100 x 75 cm, 2015

About

The theme of my paintings revolves around the topic of being at home. Here in Germany I am feel at home, but what exactly is it to feel at home? Maybe feeling at home is like being comfortable with my partner or my network of friends or with my apartment or with my new netflix series or hoodie.

Pakistan 2011-15

Susanne Husemann

I spent four years with my family in Pakistan. There are insurmountable boundaries between poverty and wealth, religious affiliation and gender. I am a foreigner. As a foreigner and non-Muslim, I remain outside of this society.

Being on the outside always means being undervalued or overvalued. And I am a woman. Even the lack of a greeting handshake shows me that as a woman I do not belong in this male society. I am driving through the streets, seeing the poverty, the colonies and refugee homes, I am seeing the greed for life, an imagined life, and the hate.

I am a stranger here. We live in a big house surrounded by a high wall. We are protected by our status of diplomats. We have a different identity card, a different car number plate. We have a day and a night guard. The night guard, Abdul Rahmann, comes every evening at 6 pm and leaves again at 7 am.

The day guard Imran keeps our house in order, washes and irons our clothes and lets visitors in. In addition, we have a gardener and a cook. I enjoy being able to hand off this work to have time to foster contacts with a small community. I give classes in painting for women at the embassy and I learn Urdu, the official language of Pakistan. I learn to play golf and tennis. And I learn karate. I get to know my body in a new way. I feel how it works, exerting pressure and counter pressure.

29.03.2012

I am in the kitchen with our day guard Imran. I ask him about his religion. He tells me about his wife. "She can freely recite large parts of the Quran", he says, "...more than me." And he points to his heart. And when his child wakes up at night, she speaks verses from the Quran. I think of his other story, which he had told me a few days before. That he moved with his family from his home village Kohat (Kohat: sounds so beautiful) to Islamabad, because the Taliban took away his house. And now he works here for us, in our house. And about the beheadings and he saw how the children started playing soccer with these heads.

Mens world, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm, 2015





Rawalpindi street life, oil on canvas, 60 x 90 cm, 2013

Pakistan 2011-15

Land of cloth

Land of eagles and snakes

Land of prayers

Land of demarcation and assignment

Land of street children

Land of the oppression of women



Kashmir, oil on canvas, 70 x 100 cm, 2014



Home of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, oil on canvas, 80 x 60 cm, 2013



Skardu, oil on canvas, 60 x 70 cm, 2012

25.03.2012 Skardu

The mountains in the north of Pakistan are breathtakingly beautiful. The way people live here is simple and warm. Perhaps it is the little goat that unexpectedly stumbles around the corner in the village street that brings balance to the people here. A group of girls stands in the street and watch me curiously as if I come from another planet.

I hold up my camera and off they run, laughing. A game develops. The mixture of fun and feeling keeps this little game moving. It's like I'm able to lock their identity into this little photo box. So, it seems dangerous. I take pictures of the running girls and then finally one dares to stand still for a few seconds and then runs off again laughing. I feel like a culprit. I make this beautiful landscape my motif and the girls my living memory. I put the phone back into my pocket. The girls stand at a distance, and I laugh with them about my behavior.

We are on our way back to our hotel in Shigar Fort in Skardu, a fabulous hotel built in the 17th century by the King of the Amacha Dynasty of Shigar, converted into a hotel only a few years ago. We hear news of unrest nearby. Not far from this road, fighting has broken out in Gilgit between Sunnis and Shiites. Our driver drives fast along the stony unpaved roads along the Indus River.

Suddenly a group of young men block our road. They have built a fire, a car tyre is burning and stones have been placed across the road. They circle our car. There is an unintelligible jumble of shouts and gesticulation, one boy has a stick in his hand. We cannot judge the situation. Conflict borne from faith is foreign to me. I look at the beautiful mountains, I imagine the tremendous eruption of the earth plates and see the mountains emerging. I look at the wide Indus flowing slowly. Trees reach up in to the sky, old and powerful. I see us from above as a small irregularity in the landscape. But then we are allowed to drive on. The driver has apparently spoken the decisive right words. They let us pass.

Stomach ache in the evening. Nothing unusual here in Pakistan. The body has to adjust to the foreign food and water. At two o'clock I wake up and can't fall asleep again, my stomach is rumbling. The room is pitch dark. I can't find a flashlight. I feel for my bathrobe. My daughter comes with a flashlight. We stumble down the hotel hallway to the roof terrace. Not a single light burns in the village, the stars and the moon are all the more radiant. It is full moon. In the distance we can see the snow-capped mountains. The light is soft and has shades of gray. The only sound is the flow of the river. In such a moment we know that there are gods up there and within us - all around us.

Between light and darkness, oil on canvas, 74 x 63 cm, 2019

15.04.2012, 4 a.m.

I hear chanting from the nearby mosque. A cyclical monotony of a chant that includes "Allah Allah" in every line. It settles over the whole city and in every crack of our house and resonates in my dreams. It divides the day into a 5-hour rhythm. It determines the course of the day and night and gives it a cyclical stability. It is the breath and foundation of the people living here. A song that remains so strange to me, like the whole religion of Islam.

Two picture on the next page:

Between light and darkness, oil on canvas, 40 x 50 cm, 2015





Between light and darkness, oil on canvas, 90 x 70 cm, 2019

22.04.2012

Men are squatting at the side of the street, smoking and looking..., looking at me. I feel like an object.

28.04.2012

I feel like an outsider here.





Between light and darkness, oil on canvas, 70 x 90 cm, 2019



Between light and darkness, oil on canvas, 70 x 90 cm, 2019

KAABA, oil on canvas, 115 x 90 cm, 2015

02.04.2012 Taxila

I sit on a knee-high foundation wall. I look around at the walls, all of the same height, which had once been a city with streets, temples and stores, now desolate. As if with every destroyed stone the history had also been exorcised. Taxila has a precious history that made it an UNESCO World Heritage Site.

I close my eyes, I want to sense the history. Based on an Indian myth, Taxila was founded by Baratha, the brother Rama, the personified world soul of the Hindus. In another source Taxila was connected to the birth story of Buddhism. In the 6th century B.C, Taxila was the capital city of Gandhara – what a beautiful name.

Alexander the Great drove out the Persians. But it did not matter who lived here, the Persians, the Greek, the Kusars or later the Indians, Taxila was practicing Buddhism, until the Huns buried the 1000-year long Buddhist history. In a thunderstorm of thoughts of racing history.

My feet dig into the sand. It is hot, as is the air. I am tired. I paint shapes in the sand with my bare feet. The Pakistani guide looks at me puzzled. I watch two boys cutting grass among the ruins with rusty sickles and tossing it into a large sack dangling over their shoulder. "They are brothers. They have a cow and they collect grass for it. Every morning they come." The tourist guide's sentence wakes me from my wandering thoughts. He leads me to a deep pit a short distance away, "this was the town before". We both stare at piles of stone. Three cities were built and destroyed here.

I think of Jerusalem, of the magic of places that have a similar history. And I stand here now in this short interval of time after a destruction and if I would only live a little longer and wait, I would meet the busy excavators, construction planners and engineers followed by powerful men claiming this place for their purposes until the next battle.



18.04.2012

I feel lonely. I look around and I only see strange faces. I am in nowhere land. I don't fit in here. Walls everywhere. Not only around every building, but also in my mind.

27.04.2012

Life is a lie, but which lie am I living?

01.05.2012

The first thing I noticed in Pakistan was the burqa. A special garment that has a strange attraction to me. The burqa is scary and strange at the same time. It covers the body and by doing this, it rouses my interest about the woman underneath. Fluttering long mountains of fabric with a lattice window are passing by quickly, with slightly changing colors, often in a dull blue tone and always present in groups. The mountain top often leans to one side and seeing this little mountain top dancing shows an active conversation. The burqa is more than a garment. It is home and protection in a world of men.

The burqa protects me from questions. I can see you, but you can't see me. I am driving with a friend to Rawalpindi, the old capital of Pakistan. We each put on a burqa and amuse ourselves by getting lost in the maze of people. Who am I under the burqa? I exist as a burqa walking through the streets. I feel safe, I don't stand out, I am no longer the foreigner, I can go anywhere. I am excluded, demarcated, a wandering tent. I belong, to the other tents. We become a tent landscape.



Blue burqa band, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm, 2015

(Picture on the next page)

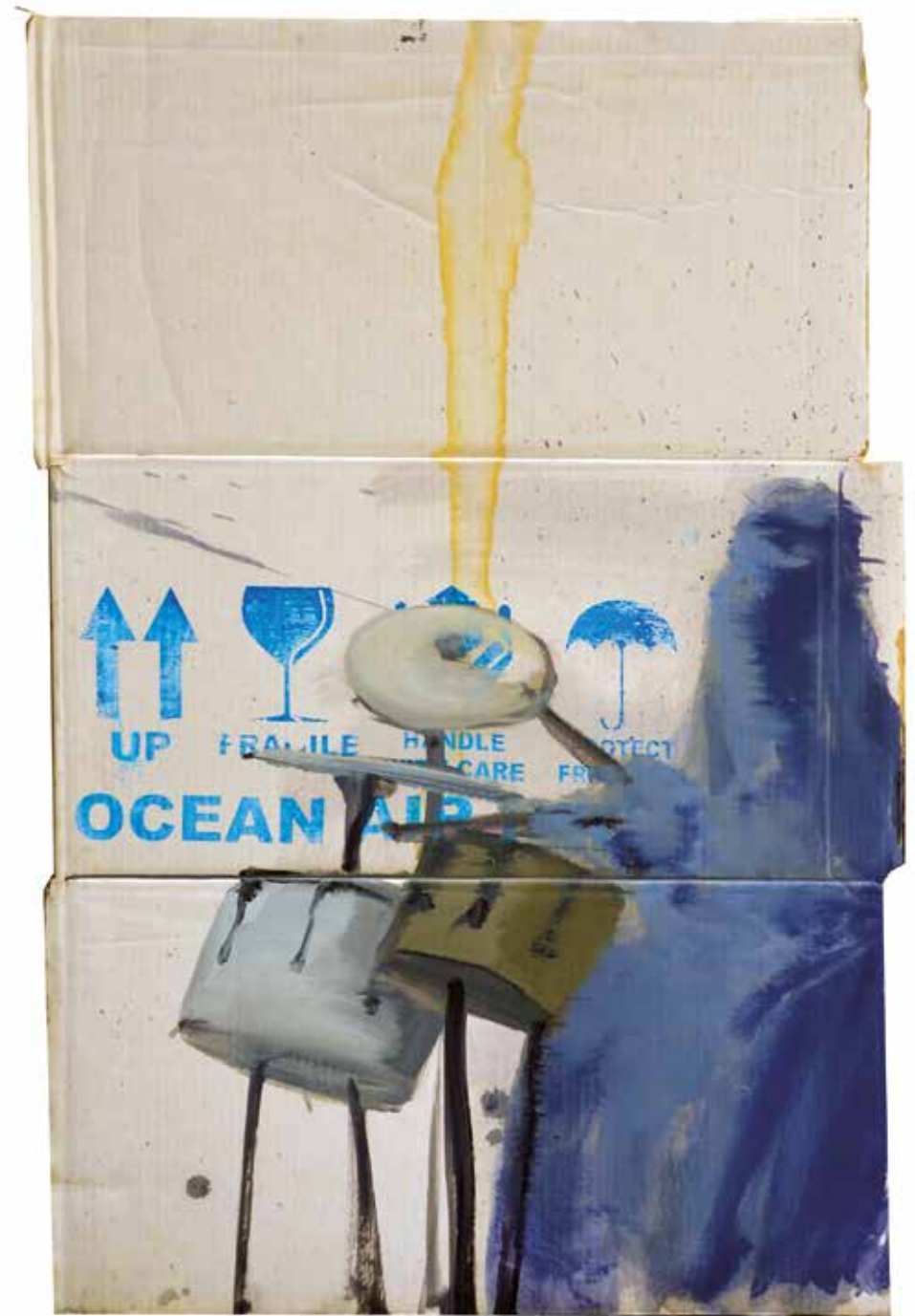
Blue burqa band, oil on canvas, 110 x 150 cm, 2015





Blue burqa band, oil on canvas, 50 x 70 cm, 2015

Blue burqa band, oil on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2013





Burqa, oil on canvas, 100 x 50 cm, 2014



Me and my burqa, oil on canvas, 190 x 100 cm, 2013



Burka-Berge, oil on canvas, 100 x 130 cm, 2014



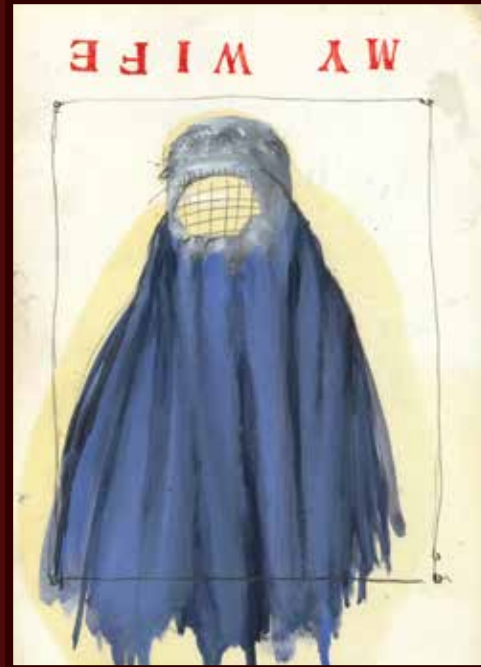
The three wise, oil on canvas, 100 x 130 cm, 2014

Irritation, oil on canvas, 140 x 140 cm, 2013





My daughter,
drawing on paper, 40 x 30 cm, 2013



My mom,
drawing on paper, 40 x 30 cm, 2013



My wife,
drawing on paper, 40x30cm, 2013

(Picture on the next page)
My hobby,
drawing on paper, 30x40cm, 2013

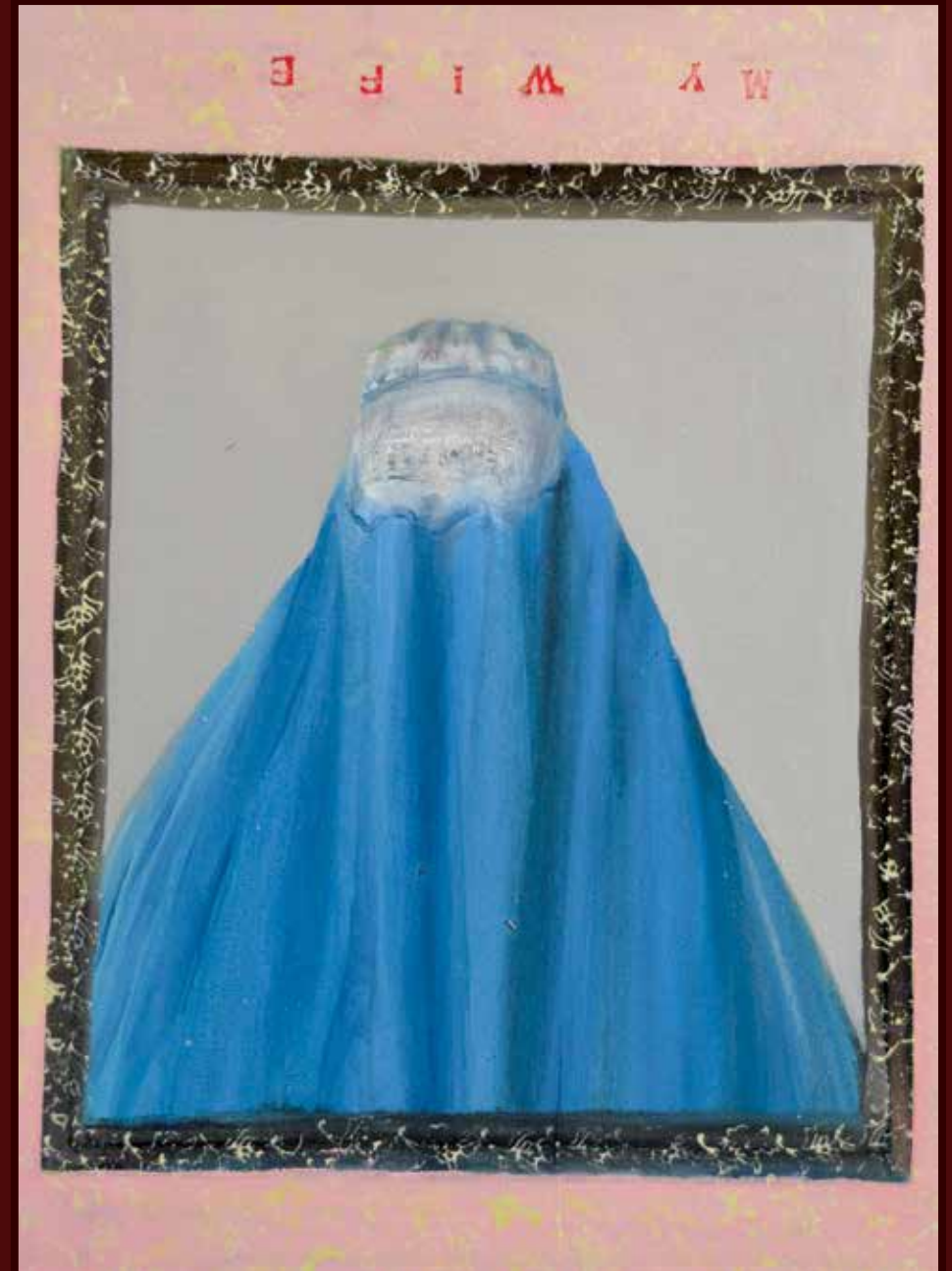
MY HOBBY



My wife, oil on canvas, 60 x 45 cm, 2015

06.05.2012

From 7 o'clock, the electricity is turned off.
It's just before 7.
The water is bubbling in the water boiler,
I make myself a coffee
and a hot lemon water for my daughter.
Then the power turns off.
Not only the households are without electricity,
the whole district is cut off.
It then alternates with the other districts.
The traffic lights are also turned off.
If you look at the city from above
in a restaurant on the Magalla Hills,
it looks like a play of lights.



HELP, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 cm, 2019

07.05.2012

Today I visited Aja, the wife of a State employee. There are servants everywhere and two of them are already outside, show me a place to park my car and then ask me into the house. Aja comes to meet me, introduces me briefly to her parents-in-law. She leads me to the upper floor. In the hallway there is a sofa next to a big refrigerator humming loudly and everywhere there are big bags of clothes.

On the wall is a landscape of sabers and certificates that tell of her husband's career. Aja complains about the bags of clothes that came from her brother-in-law's second wife. Since his first wife could not have a child, he had the right to take a second wife. Aja complains about her and this situation in the house. But in Pakistan it is the culture, that the wife moves in with the husband and his parents.

We arrive at her room, which she shares with her husband. I sit on her marital bed and can see both of us in the reflection of her two winged dressing table. We look like girlfriends. We melt into the image of a shared story that is happening. I look at the many things that are on the dressing table. Perfume from well-known companies alternating with knickknacks.

"What's it like to fall in love?", Aja asks me, "What is it like to choose the man you love?", "What is love for you?". I don't want her to envy me, and I don't pity her either. I am interested in her life. It feels strange to me.





Home, oil on canvas, 105 x 120 cm, 2020



Bride,
oil on canvas, 65 x 45 cm, 2014



Bride, oil on canvas, 65 x 45 cm, 2014



Bride, oil on canvas, 65 x 45 cm, 2014

02.06.2012

I organized a project with children from the Mashall Street Children School . I took pictures of all the pupils (over 400 kids!) and pasted them together on a big cardboard.

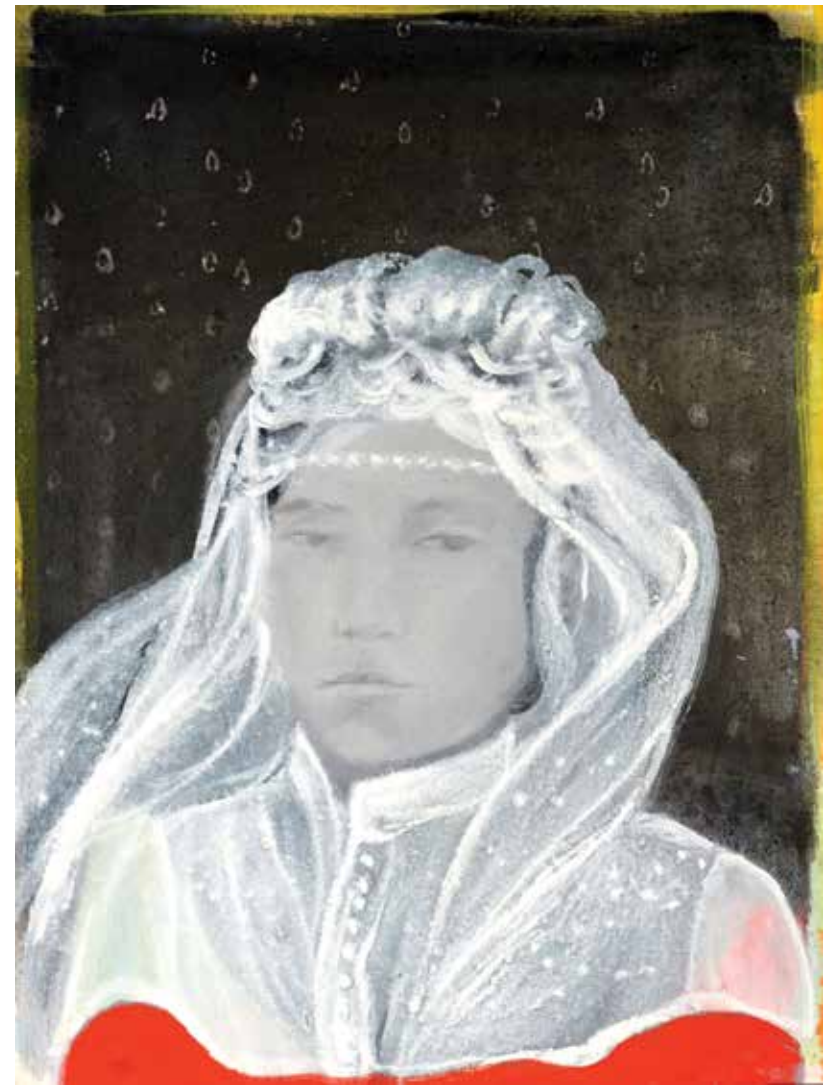
The students are very proud and happy about the photos and the new large group photo cardboard on the outside facade of the school. They look for their own photo and their friend's or discover a photo of a classmate.

They look at their little picture surrounded by the other little faces. "I belong here. I belong to this-school. I have an identity".

That's what this large photo collage was meant to convey, and all the children see it and feel it, and rejoice with each other.



Rabbits in my living room, oil on canvas, 80 x 75 cm, 2014

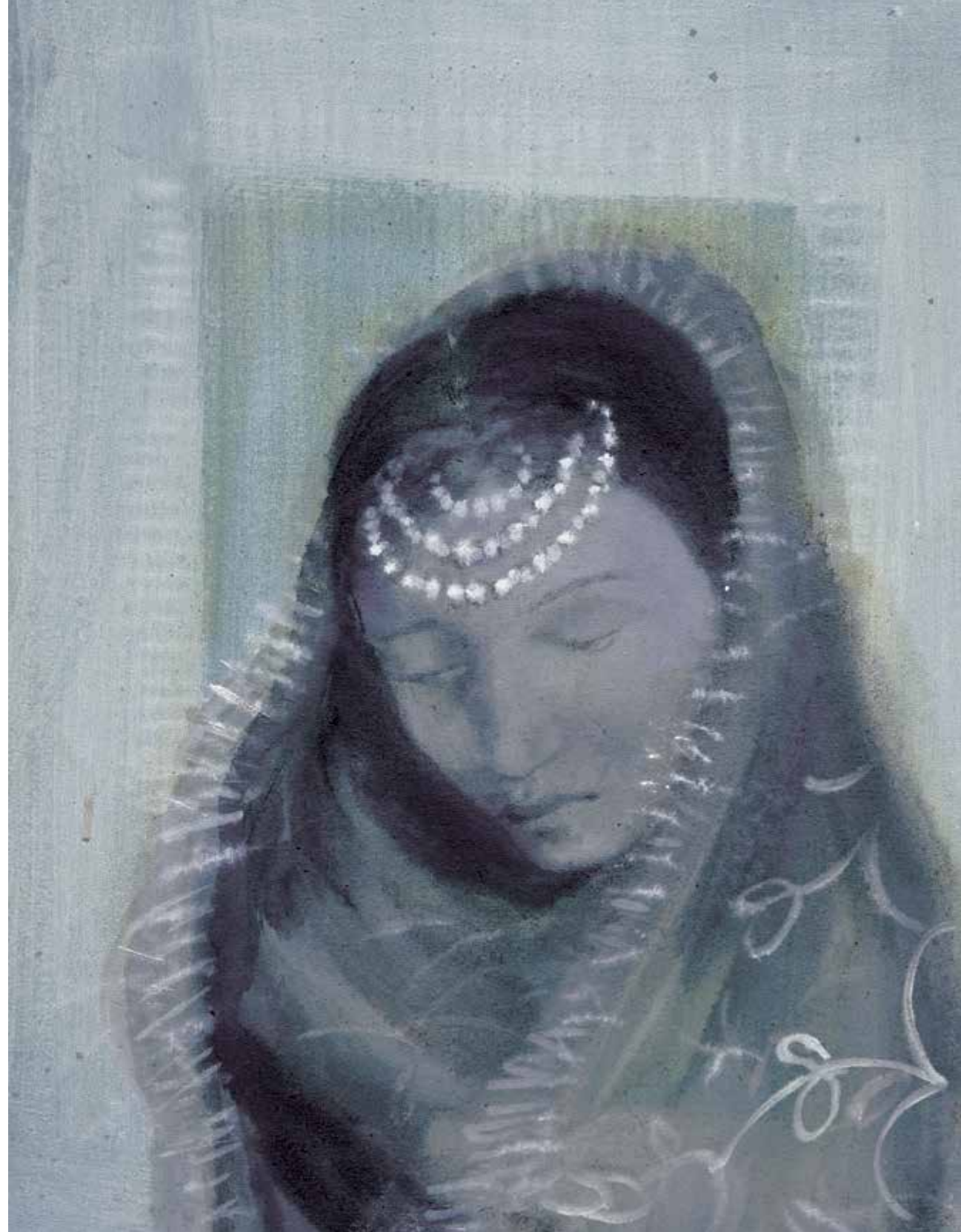


Bride, oil on canvas, 65 x 45 cm, 2014

Bride,
oil on canvas, 65 x 45 cm, 2014



Bride, oil on canvas, 65 x 45 cm, 2014



Bride,
oil on canvas, 65 x 45 cm, 2014

Bride, oil on canvas, 65 x 45 cm, 2014



Two pictures on the next page:

Idu-l-fitr, oil on canvas, 65 x 45 cm, 2014

Idu-l-fitr, oil on canvas, 65 x 45 cm, 2014



30.10.2012 Karachi

I am invited to participate with my paintings in the first German culture week, organized by the German Embassy and the Goethe Institute. My daughter and I get a driver from the embassy. He knows exactly all the places of interest here in Karachi, and more importantly, he knows which places are safe for us or how long we should stay in one place without getting into danger. What exactly the danger is, we don't know. Robberies, protection rackets, contract killings, shootings are part of everyday life here.

The first thing I notice here in Karachi are the beautiful buildings from the colonial era with lots of stucco and high ceilings. I feel reminded of Edinburgh, but in need of massive restoration, half of the stucco has fallen off or has been shot away, the entrances are only partially usable, other windows and doors are closed with board shutters and no longer usable. The streets are empty. It is the public holiday Id al-Adha. I think about the colonial era. Who owned these buildings? Then we see a beautiful mosque located in a side street, very plain, just a white flat hemisphere with a fountain in the front yard. Our driver wants to show us the mosque. The mosque is empty and two guards are standing in front of the entrance. We are not allowed to go inside. My skirt is too short, said the guard. Our driver talks briefly with the guard and gives him a few rupees. Now he nods. We take off our shoes and walk over the smooth white-hot marble to the mosque. There are marble basins for washing the feet.

The interior seems huge. Empty large rooms have something fascinating. In a moment they could come to life again with the many believers who visit the mosque for the next prayer, just a moment of silence between the five times "Allahu akbar Qad qamati-salah". I can feel the breath of those praying, the sound reverberating in the dome, the rustling of the caftans, even the pungent smell of the men's sweat.
"Allahu akbar ashhadu an la ilaha illallah."

31.10.2012 Karachi

It is the last day of Idu I-Adha (the Feast of Sacrifice). Animals are slaughtered in the streets. A cow is standing on a crossroad. The legs are tied together, a few men push it over. People watch from the windows. The owner stands proud next to the cow and reads from the Quran. Then another cuts the animal's throat with a knife. It is still breathing. Blood shoots out of its neck in pulses. The cow's head is bent backwards. Its mouth is tied shut. It makes no sound. Everything is happening so fast.

I am filming the ceremony. I find the whole situation repulsive, I feel sorry for the cow. I want to know how the knife feels like. A man hands me the blood-stained knife. The blade and the handle of the knife merge into each other. No leather or cloth for the handle. It's a nice little steel knife. I stand over the cow. The men are laughing. A photo for my memory. Do I want to remember? Our driver asks me to get into the car.

It is not good to stay in one place for more than 10 minutes. Everywhere you can be kidnapped. Kidnapping is a lucrative business. All it takes is for a man to shout something or walk towards me. It can happen quickly out of nowhere. We are not safe here.

The Karachi beach is silver gray, the iron content is high. Our feet shine silvery in the sun. The sun is slowly setting. It is a public holiday. People enjoy being here on the beach at the outskirts of the big city. Not only pedestrians walk along the beach here. Motorcycles and cars race along the beach as well. Camels with their reassuring slow pace, swinging colorful seats on their backs with beachgoers.

Picture on the next page:

Roses, oil on canvas, 40 x 55 cm, 2017





Football, oil on canvas, 130 x 140 cm, 2014



Football, oil on canvas, 100 x 120 cm, 2013



Mother and Son, oil on canvas, 60 x 90 cm, 2016



Childhood,
oil on canvas, 60 x 45 cm, 2015



Kobane, *oil on canvas, 45 x 60 cm, 2015*



Kobane, *oil on canvas, 45 x 60 cm, 2015*



Boy, *acryl on canvas, 50 x 45 cm, 2015*

Girl,
acryl on canvas, 60 x 45 cm, 2015

Exposed, oil on canvas, 55 x 40 cm, 2017

20.02.2013

There are many children begging on the streets. At traffic lights they wait. It seems to be organized where they stand and then who gets the money. One girl is without shoes. We give her some. Two days later she has no shoes, again.

13.04.2013

Poverty is deterrent. Its sight is raw. Many thin arms reach into the car interior wanting money and very quickly the joy of a 50 rupee changes into aggression and greed.

01.05.2013

Aja invites me to do target practice at a military facility. I'm excited about the chance to hold a rifle and shoot. I wonder what it's like to shoot with real guns. I get to try out different rifles, pistols and even submachine guns. I shoot standing up and lying down. Cardboard signs with an outline of a human being. The possible targets at the head and heart are marked. I score well and I am proud. Afterwards I am allowed to take the cardboards home. Strange to watch myself doing this.



15.01.2014

The year begins. I want to do everything better.
Old plans are formulated into new ones.
I have the feeling this year will be a good year,
a year in which everything changes fundamentally.
I will finally earn money with my paintings.
I make myself a second coffee in the morning
and look at the newspaper online.
A brief flash of facts, important and heavy,
new, and gone the next day.

New world order, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 cm, 2015



New world order, oil on canvas, 50 x 45 cm, 2015

08.01.2014

Today the fog is so dense in the early morning,
a warning message from the school.
The air is icy. We get into the unheated car.
Our Landrover does not want to start,
we can only start in reverse gear.
And every time it does start,
we are relieved.



New world order, oil on canvas, 60 x 45 cm, 2015



13.10.2012

I am on the golf course of the Islamabad Club. Right next to the course, a demonstration is passing by. Loud jihad shouts are accompanied by gunshots. I briefly think about the situation and look at my golf instructor. He shows no reaction.

I continue to practice my tee shot. It is slowly getting better. For weeks, as a beginner, I was only allowed to use iron club #7.

I lost interest and decided to change the instructor. A wise decision. Finally, I was allowed to use the driver and the balls flew quite well into the distance. Now I hold the driver in my hand like a trophy. I feel the absurdity of the moment.

Outside they are standing with sticks calling for justice and I am standing here just a few meters away with my stick in my hand. The dangerous shouts of jihad fizzle out here on the golf course lawn.

Forever young, oil on canvas, 90 x 60 cm, 2016



19.02.2014

Loneliness lurks everywhere. I fall into it again and again.
I am in a minefield. I do not know whose life I am living.
Everywhere I see red colored beards. I imagine birds
nesting in them.

Imran told me today that his brother came back.
He was suddenly standing in front of the house.
He was completely run down, with cuts on his face and dirty
evil-smelling clothes. "You smell awful", he greeted him.
His brother threw his jacket away and asked for his.
So, he gave him his. He had not seen him for more
than 5 years, he had disappeared and his return moved him.
He made virtual signs of tears running down his cheeks.
He told all this while laughing, of course, with his strange
English made out of a few words. 500 m from our house on
the market, was a suicide attack, 11 dead.

22.02.2014

On You Tube you can see two Japanese kneeling in orange
shirts and you can hear the accentuated English of the
same ISIS fighter, who is now known to be from England.



New world order, oil on canvas, 50 x 45 cm, 2015

16.12.2014

**TALIBAN PERPETRATE SCHOOL
MASSACRE IN PAKISTAN**

At least 140 people die in massacre +++
Children forced to watch as teacher
burned to death +++

A spokesman for the Pakistani Taliban
said it was revenge for the army's actions:
"We chose the army school for the attack
because the government is targeting our
families and women. We want them to
feel our pain". I keep reading in disbelief
what is happening in this country and I
sit in the sun by the pool at the
Canadian Embassy.

20.01.2015

Gas problems are intensifying. But gasoline
is getting scarce also. Normally gas
is used here for cars because it is simply
cheaper. But gas is no longer available
and the cars stand in line for hours for gasoline
at the gas stations, the queues are
hundreds of meters long. Car pools are
now being formed at the embassy to save
gas or gasoline.



Bubble, water color on paper, 30 x 20 cm, 2017

25.01.2015

Sunday, weekend in Pakistan.
No electricity and no internet, but the sun is shining.

28.01.2015

Exactly 70 years ago the Americans “liberated the Jews in Auschwitz”, according to the German press. 70 years seem so short.

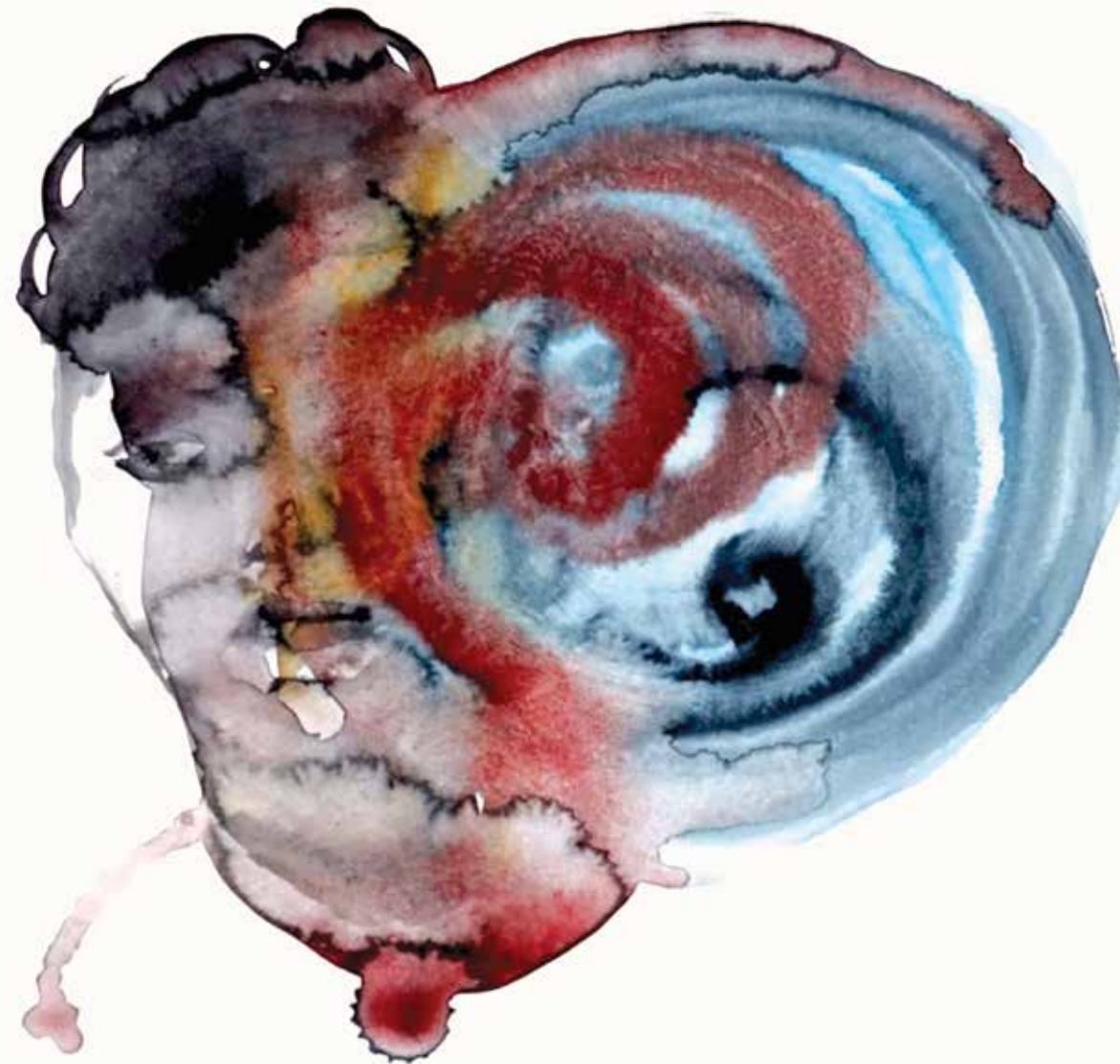
30.01.2015

Raif Badawi.
It gives hope that there are people like him!

31.01.2015

At least 40 people have been killed in a bomb blast at a Shia mosque in southern Pakistan in Shikarpur, officials say. Dozens were wounded in the attack after Friday prayers in the Shikarpur district of Sindh province, and the death toll is expected to rise. Sunni militants linked to the Pakistani Taliban said that they carried out the attack.

Hairdressers work outside. A table with a pair of scissors and a razor. A mirror is attached to a tree or leaning against a wall, some water and a chair, that's all they need. It is also a meeting place for conversation. A few just sit there and talk.



Bubble,

water color on paper, 30 x 20 cm, 2017



Bubble, water color on paper, 20 x 30 cm, 2017

Bubble,
water color on paper, 30 x 20 cm, 2017



Bubble, water color on paper, 30 x 20 cm, 2017



Bubble, water color on paper, 30 x 20 cm, 2017

Dream,
water color on paper,
30 x 40 cm, 2017

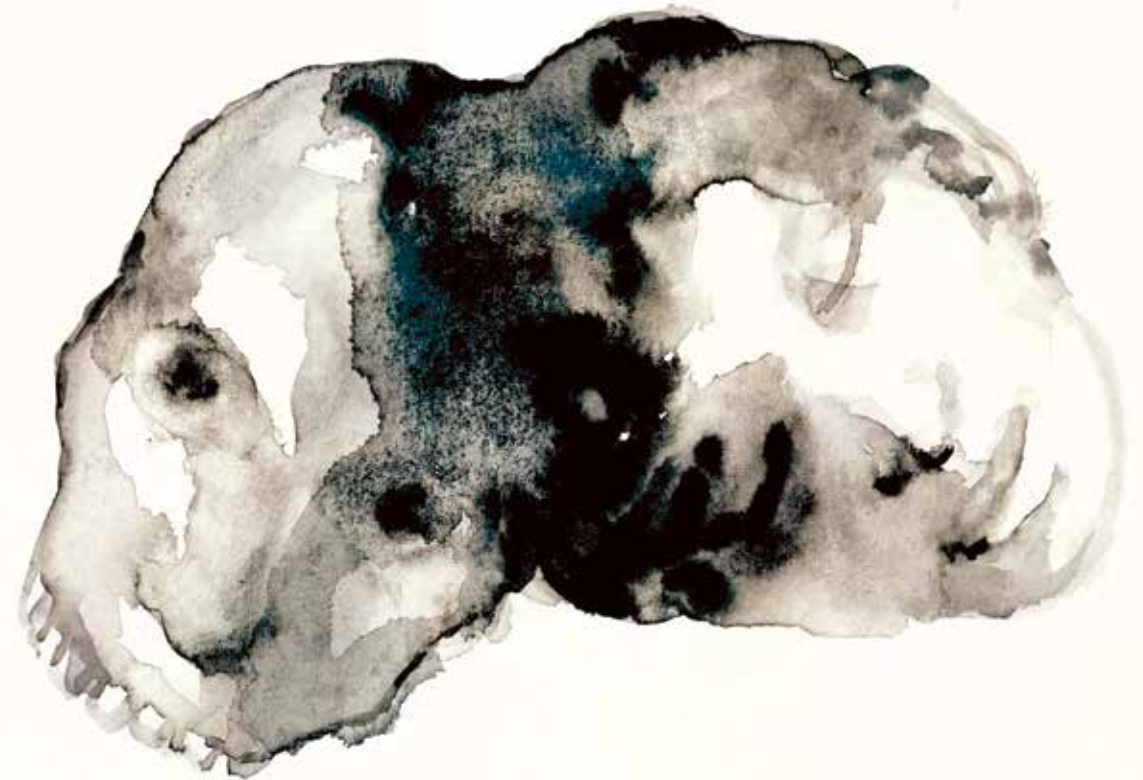
04.02.2015

I am standing at the counter of the meat store at the local market. An elderly Muslim with a beard in a white, somewhat worn linen caftan and a friendly smile approaches me. He obviously wants to congratulate me: "You did the only right thing at the time". He speaks of "your country", "your leader", he emphasizes "your Hitler".

I do not know how to answer and just stare at him. His convincing smile, his openly inviting attitude does not allow for anything else than to rejoice with him. I think of Adorno. I think of Hanna Arendt and Carolin Emke, of concepts and sentences that helped make the incomprehensible, of our German history, explainable.

I was able to distance myself from it, a history that occupies only a small part of my bookshelf. All at once it was there again, and I noticed that all these many mental arguments of the many clever heads from all over the world, turned out to be unsatisfactory and actually explained nothing at all, and thereby degenerated into a kind of self-expression. Thoughts, which produced only further thoughts and let suspicion, lie, anger, and sadness develop.

And the friendly smile of this Muslim stabbed me in the middle of my heart. I realized that there is no second nature, and there is no "banality of evil", there is no final right judgment.



06.03.2015

Finally, it is raining less.
The electricity is out.
The pipes are wet.
The interior rooms are cold.

08.03.2015

And today I'm in the news...
my exhibition. Yay!
<http://www.dawn.com/news/1168325>

Victory,

oil on canvas, 60 x 45 cm, 2016



20.06.2015

Back in Berlin again. It's disturbing that in Pakistan the reality seems more real and being here in Germany feels like being in a padded cell. In Pakistan, life is direct. It hits you. Everything is visible: the hunger, the poverty, the violence. We talk of better understanding but make terrible mistakes with the refugees, make false concessions, confuse concession with understanding. People run helplessly from one country to the next. We continue to watch. Our thoughts are disconnected from any action. We sit in front of the television and keep watching. In our heads we invent new worlds and our hand is reaching for a satisfying glass of wine. There is no system to guide us anymore.

An open mind could save us, but we only allow it when visiting our children's room. Playing-along with the children for a short while, then who remains there perplexed when the adult "changes back". Art is cowardice before anger. Is formal Impotence. And from our failures a new style is born. Art is stillborn, dictated by the art market to become a priceless artifact.

The irritating thing for me is that our reality - our living world - is many times more cruel and inhuman than I could ever imagine in my worst fantasies. Family is my bond to the world that is not mine, and keeps me in being so, which is not my choice. And I, too, look only forward, not sideways, and do not want to see the headless brother, because otherwise I would have to act. But how?



Solo Exhibitions

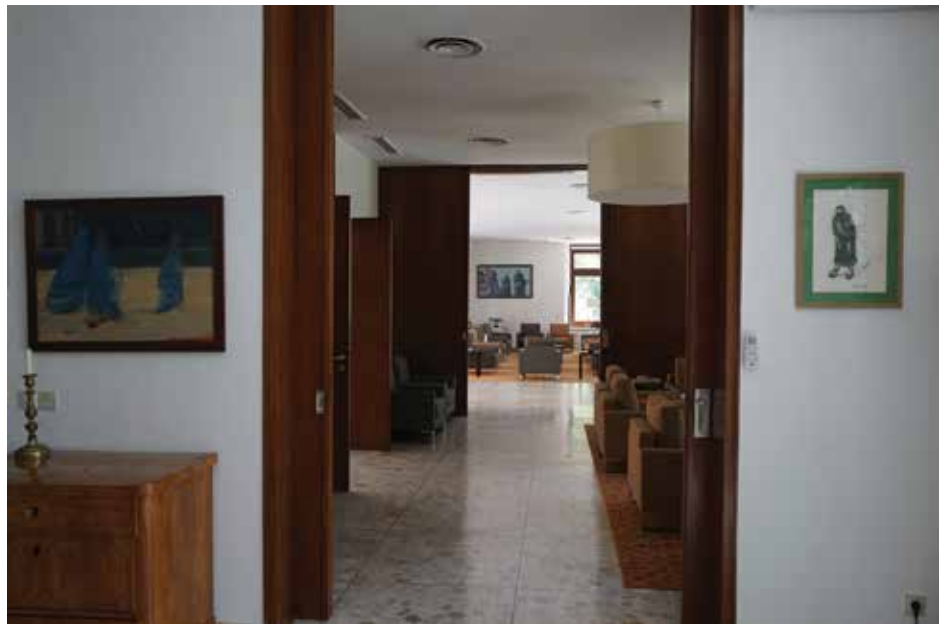
- 2012 Nomad Gallery, Islamabad
- 2012 Rothas Gallery, Lahor
- 2012 VM Art Gallery, Karachi, German Art Festival organized by Goethe Institut
- 2012 ZhongGong Art space, MianYang, China
- 2013 K-Salon, Berlin
- 2013 O'Reilly, Islamabad
- 2014 Tribal Art Gallery, Islamabad
- 2014 Nomad Gallery, Islamabad
- 2015 German embassy, Islamabad



German embassy, Islamabad



O'Reilly, Islamabad



German embassy, Islamabad



German embassy, Islamabad



MyBurka - Performance / K-Salon/Berlin 2018 / Kellergalerie/Wien 2020

In public there has been much discussion about the burqa. But what does it really mean to wear one? This installation was about bringing visitors closer to this experience. They were allowed to wear a burqa themselves. Between interest and scruples, aversion and shyness, everyone wanted to try how it feels underneath.

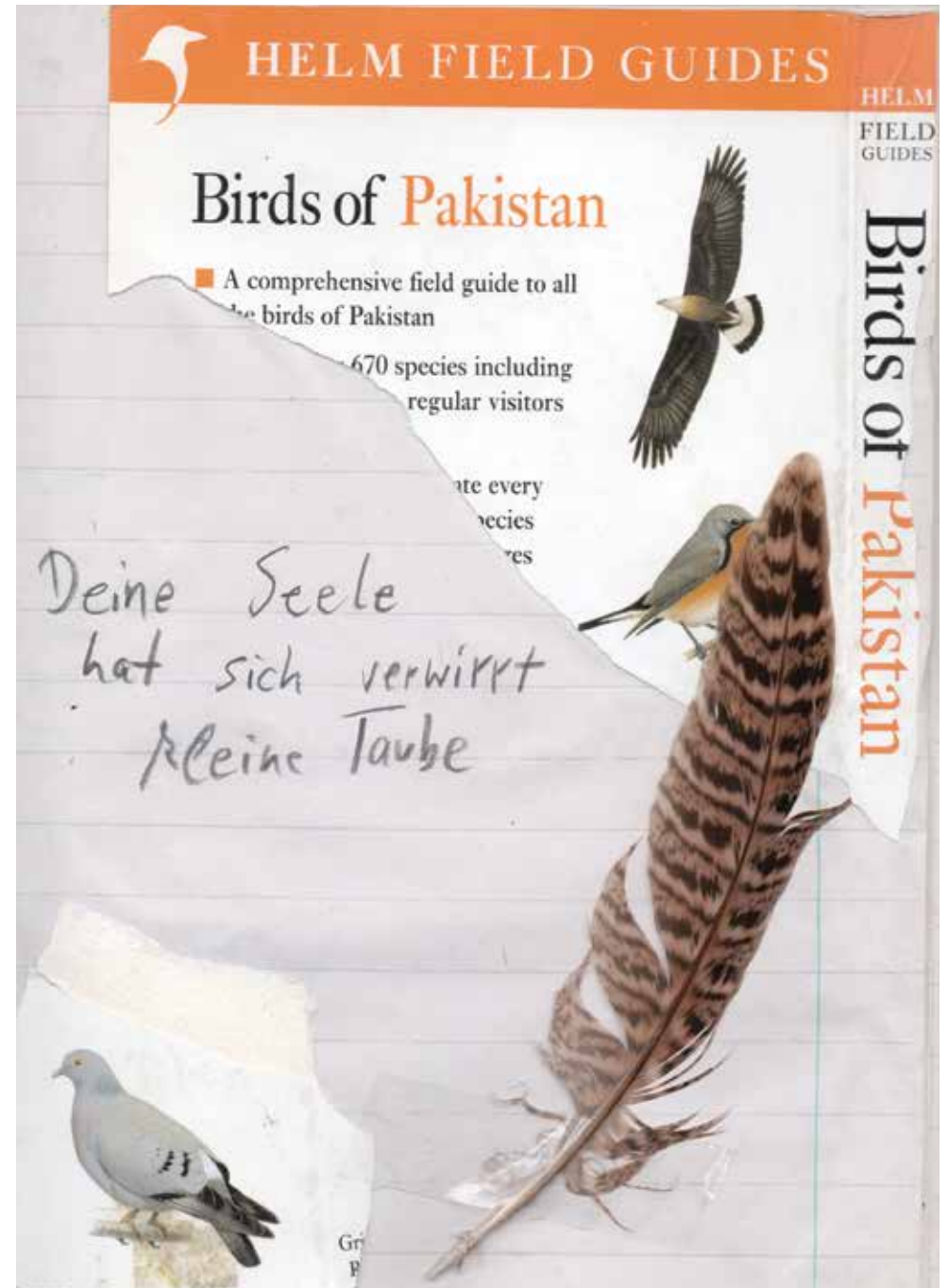
With a Polaroid camera, the visitors were photographed wearing a burqa. On the white border of the Polaroid the visitors could write their name. The changing names with the identity-less photos makes the problem of a burqa tangible. The resulting photos became part of the exhibition.



DIARY - PAKISTAN



Me with Burka and chicken on Vespa, 2015



AN DEN Nachtwächter!

Was machst du die ganze Nacht?

Schläfst du irgendwann ein?


Vor jedem Haus sitzt du in einem
kleinem Häuschen.

Kennt ihr euch?

Bewacht ihr euch gegenseitig?

Schaut ihr die Sterne an?

Was ist die Nacht?
für euch



Hallo! - Assalamo aleikum!

Ichüss - Khuda hafiz!

JA - Dschit haan ج.ح.ج

NEIN - Nahin ن.ح.ن

to - from meet Date: happy:

app sey mil kar khushi hai.

Freut mich dich kennenzulernen
Freut dich ^{come}

app kahaan say aaiy / aai hai?

Woher kommst du? Woher

Main (...) aaya / aai hoon.

Ich komme aus

app ki kumhaan kya umar hai?

Wie alt bist du?

Mairi umar (...) bars / saal hai.

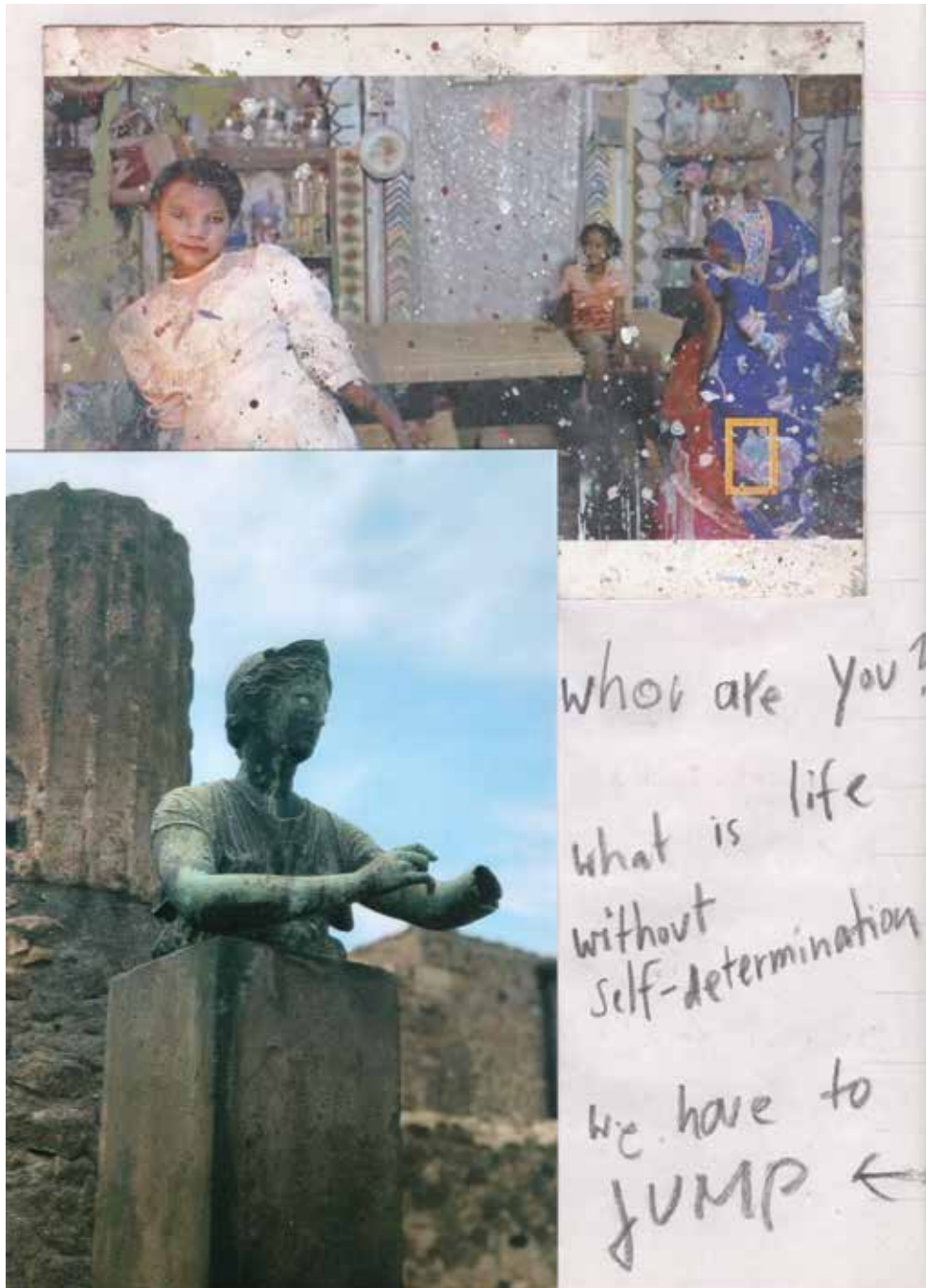
Ich bin ... Jahr alt

Main nahin samjhi / a! (p.m.)

Ich verstehe das nicht

Allha Hafiz!

Auf Wiedersehen!





- und wären wir ohne Geld
wären wir nur die Christen,
und wir lebten in der Kolonie
ohne Wasser und Strom.
Kein Hauch Leben wären wir Wert
Herr Paschtun, so stolz, worauf?

Stamm ↔ Staat
FATA DURAND-LINIE = Grenze als Ort der
eigenen Staatlichkeit
zeigt sich wie als Ort der staatl. Machtlosigkeit.
terrain of resistance

*Bedeutung von Grenze
Afghanistan - Pakistan*

Jeder hat eine Durand-Linie



Training in shooting, police of Islamabad



Street live



Christian colony



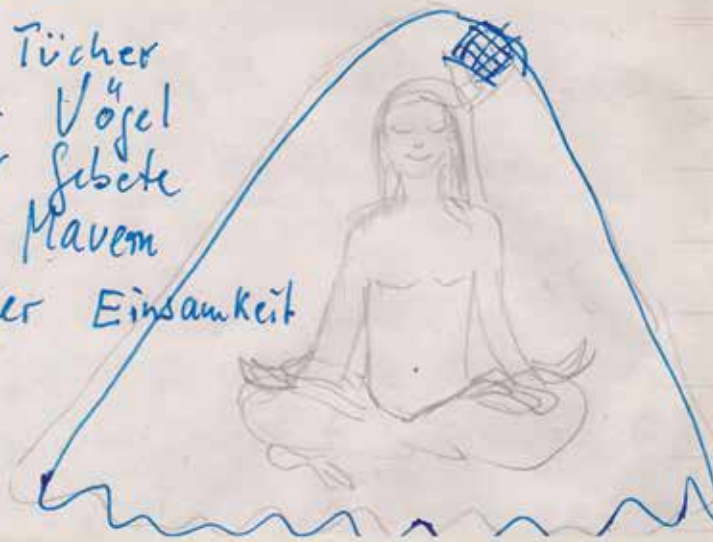
Afghan colony



Me

PAKISTAN

- Land der Tücher
- Land der Vögel
- Land der Sebete
- Land der Mavem
- Land der Einsamkeit



← Sieht aus wie ein Jährling

Ich möchte unbedingt
eine Burka kaufen
Schutz + Haus +
Abgrenzung

Die Burka schützt
mich vor Fragen.
welche Fragen?
Ich kann euch sehen.
Ihr mich nicht!

JENNY



Wer bin ich
unter einer Burka?

Kommst du mit mir
unter eine Burka?
vielleicht besser zu zweit?



Blue Burka Band

power women

Bild idee:

Frau hat ihre Burka abgenommen
Es beginnt zu schneien. ↙
Sie hält sie in dem Wind. ↘

Leben ist eine Lüge!
Aber welche Lüge lebe ich?



~~Leben für Dominica~~

Sprechgesang dringt in mein
Sufat. Allah
L'alam al-mein, ameen
(mit Vertrauen + Klarheit)



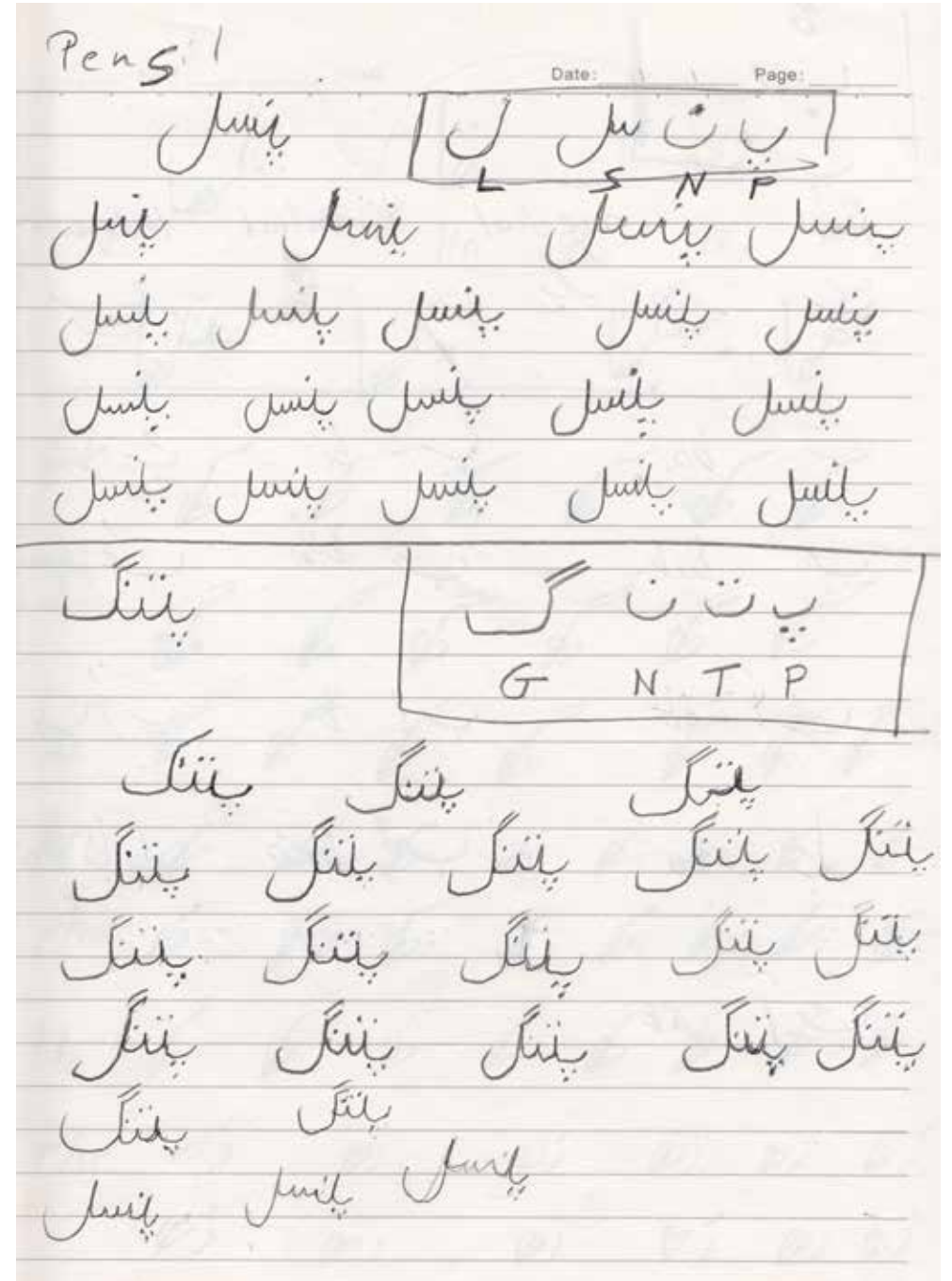
Train station Islamabad, 2014



Beach of Karachi, 2012



Artproject in Mashal Model School, Islamabad
(Street Kids School)



PRESS REVIEW



Exhibition opening in Islamabad

THE NEWS by Anil Datta Karachi 2012

Her style of painting could be classified as near abstract. Even though bordering on abstraction, the faces she sketches, despite being a wee bit foggy, display profound emotions and feelings. They mirror the sensitive, profound, and poignant nature of the artist, how she reads deep into human emotions, into the human soul. Husemann is a lyrical colourist and the subtle yet harmonious manner whereby the colours in her works blend into each other is splendid indeed. The exhibition has been sponsored by the German Consulate-General, Karachi. Addressing guests, Dr Tilo Klinner, the German Consul-General in Karachi, said that this exhibition was part of the German week which was aimed at acquainting the people of Pakistan better with German Culture and implementing cultural cooperation between the two countries. He said such events were meant to once again make Karachi a vibrant international art centre.

Inter-nation Press by Rizwan / Karachi 2012

She has beautiful smile, dynamic personality and takes more interest in taking with peoples. She is very controlled artist in her works and expressed her work with sincerity and devotion that all working are looking in real images.

Nageen Hyat / Nomad gallery 2013

Susanne's sensitive and hard-hitting collection probes beneath the surface and creates her own, powerful visual perspectives on life in this volatile, and culturally and historically rich region — where she has now live for quite some years.

The Express Tribune, January 23rd, 2014

Disdainful comfort: German artist brings story of oppressed women, idea of home to life. The compelling paintings take on a life of their own, illustrating tribal customs, outdated practices and their impact on children and youth. From burqa-clad silhouettes camping out in front of snow-capped mountains like an army, to the band girls performing on drumming kit or sporting electric guitars are some of the interesting interpretations of women in a war-ravaged territory. Another series comprises of black and white portraits of oppressed brides forced into child marriages ending in their tragic deaths. The morose feel is further illustrated through the black-and-white portraits with a combination of patterns and colours in the background.

One of them is that of an actual seven-year-old Yemeni child bride who died on the wedding night. Donning a white wedding veil, she betrays despondence through her eyes and mouth despite the bright pink backdrop's lending of a soft and lively feel. In yet another piece, a little girl is sprawled on her bed grasping a dead, bleeding bird. The girl's expression is both lifeless and melancholic simultaneously — the sense of an ending.

Husemann has likened the shackles of these young girls to the death of birds. In two of the paintings titled "It would be something to fly", the artist shows dead birds, alluding to loss of lives which were meant to be fancy-free and innocent otherwise. The exhibition which is largely reflects the artist's impression from this part of the world mainly owing to the sensationalistic hype of media reports will be inaugurated by German Ambassador Cyril Nunn and will continue till January 23.



Exhibition opening in Karachi, Islamabad, 2012

JAMAL SHAHID — PUBLISHED MAR 09, 2015 05:58AM THE DAWN

Show brings together European vocabulary and local moods ISLAMABAD: The beauty of everyday faces and fluid movement of dancing dervishes were skillfully captured in a fascinating new show by German painter Susanne Husemann.

Husemann has been living in Pakistan since the last three years and exhibiting for the third time in this show that opened in Islamabad on Sunday at the Nomad Gallery. The show features 30 of her paintings which depict pain, joy, life and death. It has been organised to mark the International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8 each year. Most visitors were pleasantly surprised to see a fresh perspective in her paintings which has evolved from an almost purely European one to reflecting more local themes.

Kay Schwendinger, who regularly visits art exhibitions in the city, said: "Some of the works are extremely European regardless of the motif, yet some work is very local. It demonstrates the artist's versatility and adaptation. Her strength in these works is how she has successfully captured intense emotions that are not easy to draw."

Nageen Hyat, the curator of the show, said it is exciting to see all that Husemann has absorbed in the three years that she has been in Pakistan. "Growing from a European vocabulary the work shows transformation into something very regional and local," said Nageen Hyat.



Streets of Islamabad

Christoph Poche 2013 K-Salon

Susanne Husemann lives in Pakistan for about one year now. She shows Pictures from two series. The series "no-noc" shows Pakistani areas to which it is currently only possible to travel if you have a so called NOC (Non Objection Certificate). Theme is the distance Pakistan. The second series of "my family" focuses the burka, a garment for women, which provides interest and misunderstanding around the world. Most important in this series is the picture "Blue Burka Band", the picture of an Afghan girl band, who sings critical songs about the burka.

Tribune 08.03.2015

A foreigner's perspective: German artist paints Pakistani life

The exhibition, part of various events to commemorate the International Women's Day in the twin cities, features Husemann's artworks which explore deep emotions of multiple subjects from women belonging to various fields of life to the whirling Sufi dervishes.

Using charcoal, acrylic and oil, the German artist's work is impressive and bold. The black and white work complemented with strong strokes of grey is powerful, mystical and engaging. In her collection, she brings some noticeable pieces such as the "Dancing Sufi" an inexplicable piece of work that instantly develops an enduring relationship with the viewer. A piece titled "Photographing", which is a side portrait of a photographer lost in her thoughts as she captures the chaos around herself, is simple and enigmatic at the same time.

Tina Nunn, anlässlich der Ausstellung in der Deutschen Botschaft Islamabad 2015

As Susanne tries to reconcile a docile and resilient image of women with the hard and fierce female fighters, who in denying their femininity become as unyielding as the men who ultimately seek to subjugate them, she discovers martyrdom in the endeavor to identify with strength, with a seductive illusion of power. This is brilliantly displayed in "Lonely Victory" which pictures a decapitated woman, who seems to have transcended mortal fears and limitations. The image ultimately addresses the concept of the sanctity of conviction and of vocational sacrifice. The implications of this cultural encounter reverberate in the female iconography of all the paintings and finally revert back to the question of what makes us more human; the divine spirit or the earthly survival instinct.

Peter Funken, November 2017

Susanne Husemann – Bilder über die Welt, in der wir leben ...

Susanne Husemann, in Berlin geboren und ausgebildet, malt seit vielen Jahren. Sie ist an einen Punkt gelangt, an dem es - so der Eindruck - kein Zurück mehr gibt: die Herstellung von Bildern ist zu einer Überlebenstätigkeit und -fähigkeit geworden. Malerei ist demnach eine Strategie zum Erkennen, Begreifen und Verstehen von Eigenem und Anderem. Husemanns Kunst ist etwas Elementares und Radikales eigen.

Vor ihrer Rückkehr nach Berlin 2017 lebte die Künstlerin für mehr als drei Jahre in Pakistan. Mit der Reflektion ihres Lebens in der muslimischen Republik und den dort gemachten Erfahrungen entstanden bereits in Islamabad erste Arbeiten einer mittlerweile umfangreichen Reihe von Bildern, in denen die Künstlerin ihre Sicht einer fremden Welt eindringlich beschreibt; die von der Religion geprägten gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse ließen ihr trotz des Komforts, den sie besaß, nur wenig persönliche Freiheit. Eine Fremde zu sein und zu bleiben war eine grundlegende Erfahrung, wie auch das Wissen um stete Überwachung und die Tatsache, als Frau ohne gleiche Rechte zu sein. Diese Erfahrungen spiegeln sich in Husemanns Bildern der Serie "Return from Pakistan" zum Teil drastisch wieder. Sie zeigen oft körperlose Köpfe und kopflose Körper, zudem auch Darstellungen von fantastischem Inhalt, die in besonderer Weise von bedrohlichen Vorstellungen handeln.

Vom Körper getrennte Köpfe erscheinen in Husemanns Malerei in drei Varianten: zuerst in der Darstellung einer vollzogenen Aktion, bei der das Messer als Tatwaffe im Bild zu sehen ist; einmal liegt es in der Hand einer Blut überströmten Enthaupteten, die sich - so wird suggeriert - selbst amputiert hat.

Sodann sind bei den mit "Lost" und "Bubble" betitelten Aquarellen zwei, drei und mehr abgeschlagene Köpfe zu sehen, die beieinander liegen, sich auflösen scheinen und ineinander fließen. Bei den Arbeiten der Serie „Bubble“ geht es Susanne Husemann um Darstellungen der Trennung von Körper und Geist, und auch – so die Künstlerin – um ihren Umgang mit Erinnerungen.

Die dritte Version des Themas unterscheidet sich deutlich von den anderen, zeigt sie doch Enthauptung und Kopflosigkeit in einer Beiläufigkeit, die das Geschehene als geradezu Gegebenes mitteilt: Für diese, mit Ölfarbe gemalten Bilder gaben alte Fotos, Familienporträts, die Anregung. Am Ende des 19. Jh. entstanden tatsächlich solche als Scherze gemeinten Fotomontagen. In einer Art von Grisailletechnik imitiert die Malerin die Atmosphäre der

schwarz-weiß Vorlagen. Den Titel wählte die Künstlerin intuitiv, sie verweist damit auf die "Familie der Menschen" und ihren mehr oder weniger deutlichen Zusammenhalt.

Bei diesen Arbeiten fällt auf, dass es trotz nicht vorhandener Köpfe keine Anzeichen von Gewalt gibt, wie sie sich in den anderen Enthauptungsbildern darstellt; vielmehr ist es so, als fehle den Frauen und Männern ganz einfach der Kopf, weil er retuschiert wurde. Der Grund dafür bleibt unbekannt.

Die Empfindungen und Überlegungen, die die von Verstümmelung beherrschten Familienbilder auslösen, sind komplex und deshalb kompliziert, denn es stellen sich mit ihnen kaum zu beantwortende Fragen nach Geschehnissen und Vorgeschichten ein, die die Künstlerin veranlasst haben, die "Familienmitglieder" als Enthauptete zu zeigen.

Will man das ganze nicht allein für einen schaurigen Scherz halten, so drängt sich die Frage nach Sinn und Bedeutung auf – sowohl der Fotografien wie auch der Malerei, denn in beidem wird mit Bedeutungsverschiebung von Wirklichkeit gearbeitet. Die Fotomonteurs im 19. Jh. ergötzen sich an der Allmacht, über die sie plötzlich im bildhaft Symbolischen verfügten. Anders Susanne Husemann, die mit der Wiederholung des Enthauptungsmotivs in realistischer Malerei eine Art durchaus Kritik äußern möchte: Nach ihrer Rückkehr aus Pakistan, wo vom IS tatsächlich Enthauptungen begangen wurden, die die Täter professionell filmten und ins Internet stellten, erkennt sie die Grundlagen der Gewalt genauso im vermeintlich zivilisierten Europa wie in Pakistan. Es stellt sich mithin die Frage, was Susanne Husemann malend ausführt oder exekutiert ... vor allem führt sie die uns innewohnende Unfähigkeit zu echter Menschlichkeit vor Augen – der Schrecken, der der Mensch dem Menschen ist, das Unheil, das wir uns antun. Insofern gebärden sich die "Familienmitglieder" mörderisch untereinander, wie es das Bild des Mannes suggeriert, der den Frauenkopf im Schoß hält. Husemann verweist mit ihren Darstellungen auch auf Parallelen zwischen seelischer und körperlicher Grausamkeit.

Das von ihr mitgeteilte Narrativ lässt aber eine Rätselhaftigkeit bestehen. In der Mehrdeutigkeit ihrer Malerei ergibt sich Erkenntniszweifel; darin liegt aber auch eine Spannung und die Wirkung, die diese Bilder auslösen: Sie sind keineswegs einfach zu konsumieren, sondern sind selber wie scharfe Messer, an denen man sich verletzen kann: sie verlangen eine radikal persönliche Auseinandersetzung und die Infragestellung von oberflächlichen Wahrnehmungen.

Die pakistanische Erfahrung löste anscheinend bei der Künstlerin eine Beunruhigung über die tatsächliche Beständigkeit von ethischen und moralischen Standards, wie wir sie gerne in Europa hätten und behaupten, aus. Davon handelt ihre Malerei. Unterschwellig vermittelt Susanne Husemanns die von ihr erlebte Verunsicherung, denn ihr gelingt es malend, Widersprüche und Gegensätze aufzeigen und diese den BetrachterInnen in symbolischer Form aber doch unmittelbar vorführen. Damit löst ihre Kunst etwas aus, dem man sich nur schwer entziehen kann – eine gewisser Schock und Betroffenheit, der man sich stellen sich sollte, will man mehr erfahren über sich und das Andere, über die Gegenwart und Zeit, in der wir leben.

Peter Funken

My daughter,
oil on canvas, 70 x 50 cm, 2014



Atelier
Islamabad



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CV

*1968 Berlin

1989-94 studies of Art at the University of Arts Berlin

1986-91 director of the theater group Theater Artaud / Berlin

1991 guest study at the school of art Glasgow

1992 qualified graduation the university of arts, Berlin

1992-93 NaFöG-scholarship and DAAD-scholarship in Japan

1994/95 basic studies of philosophy in Tübingen/Germany

1996/97 studies of philosophy at FU Berlin

1999-2011 studio in Berlin/Germany

2012-15 studio in Islamabad/Pakistan

2016-19 Campus Naturis (studies of C. G. Jung)

2021 studies of shamanic medicine by Alberto Villoldo - The Four Winds

Exhibitions

2022 - K-Salon - Berlin / Germany

2021 - Galerie Michaela Helfrich - Berlin / Germany

2020 - K-Salon - Berlin / Germany

2019 - K-Salon - Berlin / Germany

2018 - Kellergalerie Wien - K-Salon Berlin / Germany

2017 - K-Salon - Berlin / Germany

2016 - Schinken und Klötze - Berlin / Germany

2015 - German Embassy - Islamabad / Pakistan

2014 - Nomad Gallery - Islamabad / Pakistan

2014 - Heritage Gallery - Islamabad / Pakistan

2013 - O'Reilly - Islamabad / Pakistan

2013 - K-Salon - Berlin / Germany

2012 - Ahonggong art space - Mianyang / China

2012 - Friedrichstrasse200 - Berlin / Germany

2012 - Galerie Rohling - Berlin / Germany

2012 - V.M. art Gallery - Karachi / Pakistan

2012 - ROTHAS gallery - Lahore / Pakistan

2012 - Nomad gallery - Islamabad / Pakistan

2012 - K-Salon - Berlin / Germany

2011 - Hamburger Kunsthalle - Berlin / Germany

2010 - Forgotten Bar - Berlin / Germany

2010 - Kunstraum Bethanien - Berlin / Germany

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I would like to express my great respect and appreciation to Zeba Husain for her life project of Mashal Model School. This kind of project can bring about real change in the country because it goes to the heart of the problem. You can support her unique project.

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Pakistan

Susanne Husemann lived in Pakistan for more than three years. In that time her experience with the permanence of disquieting ethical and moral standards triggered her artistic response. Her paintings show the uncertainty and contradictions she experienced daily. Her approach is gestural and symbolic, giving the viewer room to process yet not allowing an easy escape. We are forced to confront the times we live in. Susanne Husemann, born and educated in Berlin, has been painting for many years. She has reached a point where - so the impression - there is no turning back: the production of images has become a survival activity and ability.

Peter Funken

BoD

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