

## Show brings together European vocabulary and local moods

Jamal Shahid — Published Mar 09, 2015 05:58am



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. According to Susanne Husemann, some of the works are heavy in symbolism – dead birds, a child hugging a dangerous bear and armed women.

"I have been moved by the culture in this part of the world. Even in Germany the Islamic culture is noticeable. So the dancing dervishes that I have painted hold special importance for me," said Susanne Husemann.

The dancing dervishes' series is smooth and musical. The dancers seem in touch with a higher being, which the artist described as positive Islamic symbol. Susanne Husemann explained how she would play Sufi music while she painted the dancing dervishes to get the expressions right.



“I hope I have been able to do justice to my subject,” she said, laughing. Appreciating the way the artist has put life in the images, Michele Galopin said: “Amazing talent and outstanding artistry are the first words that come to my mind. The movement in the robes is beautiful.”

Michele Galopin said that she had seen the artist’s works before and it was interesting to see how her style was evolving. The paintings have been finished in acrylic on canvas while some are in oil and water colours. “Acrylic is much easier to work with and it’s easy to keep mixing layers because it dries quickly. Oil is slow and takes longer to dry,” the artist said. The show will run till March 16.c

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## **A foreigner's perspective: German artist paints Pakistani life**

By Our Correspondent

Published: March 10, 2015



The artist's work reflects her thoughts on Pakistan. PHOTOS: EXPRESS

### **ISLAMABAD:**

Depicting various segments of Pakistani society as well as the living environment, German artist Susanne Husemann put on display her latest mixed media artworks at the Nomad Art Gallery on Sunday.

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.

One of her more powerful images in the collection, "ISIS2", depicts burka-clad women armed with weapons apparently holding another Muslim woman hostage.

In the artist's statement, she writes that home is part of one's cultural identity. Husemann says that she has been working in Pakistan for the past three years trying to define cultural identity in a completely different environment.



In my pictures, I show my thought and expression about Pakistan, she adds. It is an interesting and beautiful country, but unfortunately terror and violence has destabilised large parts of it, she adds.

Nageen Hyat, founder and director of the gallery, said Husemann's recent work reaffirmed the artist's reflection of the living environment in Pakistan.

"I have seen Susanne's work change from an almost purely European perspective to the evocative statement it has translated into in the current exhibition," she said.

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<http://tribune.com.pk/story/850522/a-foreigners-perspective-german-artist-paints-pakistani-life/>

## **German artist brings Lost Life to Islamabad**

ISLAMABAD: Susanne Husemann offers another glimpse into her own perspective of life through her paintings which opened at Nomad Art Gallery on Thursday.

Director Nomad Art Gallery Nageen Hayat said Susanne Husemann's paintings were an insightful, sensitive and hard-hitting collection. "She probes beneath the surface and creates her own powerful visuals regarding this volatile and historically rich region where the artist has been living for some time now," said the curator of the show while commenting on the artist's second show with Nomad Gallery. The German painter, who has exhibited her works in Scotland, Poland, USA and China, has been living in Pakistan for about a year now.

Susanne Husemann is fond of painting nature and landscapes as much as she likes painting portraits. Her paintings titled The Three Witches, Bride and Girl With Dead Bird are some of the 22 paintings hung on the walls which range between Rs70,000 and Rs180,000. In this new exhibition titled Lost Life, Susanne shows pictures from different series on home.

The first series of My Family focuses on the burka, a garment for women, which results in both interest and misunderstanding around the world. Most important in this series is the picture Blue Burka Band which pictures an Afghan girl band that sings critical songs about the burka. The other series are related to Germany and home in a historical context.

On the opening day, Susanne Husemann, who studied art at University of Berlin, said it hurt to read and watch news of subjugation of women, particularly in Afghanistan. In her paintings, she also compared young brides with dead sparrows.

"It makes me sad that girls in the tribal areas of Pakistan, as young as seven and eight, are married off to men much older when they (girls) want to go to school and make something better out of their lives," said Susanne Husemann. Similarly, the abstract landscapes of K2 and Skardu are more than just pretty images of nature. The wall symbolises the restrictions the artist feels in moving around freely.

"I wish I could go to these places. I wish I could travel to Peshawar and especially get in the car and drive all the way down to Karachi by road," the German artist said, adding that she planned to visit Northern Areas at least once before going back home next summer. She said the general impression of hostility across the country had stopped her from visiting different cities of Pakistan even though she believed it was a beautiful country.

The show was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan Cyril Nunn, and will continue till February 9.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1082294/german-artist-brings-lost-life-to-islamabad>

## Disdainful comfort: German artist brings story of oppressed women, idea of home to life

By Maryam Usman / Photo: Javaid Iqbal

Published: January 23, 2014



Susanne Husemann explains about her works to visitors. PHOTO: JAVAID IQBAL/EXPRESS

### ISLAMABAD:

In a collection of paintings going up on display at the Nomad Art Gallery here on Thursday, Susanne Husemann, a German artist, explores the notion that home is a feeling, rather than a place, a comfort zone of sorts.

“In my work, I think about home. What is home? It is not chosen but is simply there; as with identity or authenticity, it is not something that I can deliberate,” she explained.

The artist, who has been living in the country for some time, is displaying her work for the second time at the gallery. The current exhibition features work along the theme.

Titled “My family”, the first series focuses on the burka, a garment for women which invites controversy around the world. Prominent in the series are the paintings of the “Blue Burka Band,” an Afghan girls’ band who used to sing critical songs about the burka in Afghanistan. The other series meanwhile, is about Husemann’s country of origin, Germany.

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” In my work, I think about home. What is home?  
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German Artist **Susanne Husemann's**

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“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,” said Nageen Hyat, the gallery curator.

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.

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<http://tribune.com.pk/story/662151/disdainful-comfort-german-artist-brings-story-of-oppressed-women-idea-of-home-to-life/>

## **Hard-hitting art by Susanne goes on display**

Our correspondent

Thursday, January 23, 2014

Islamabad

'Lost Life,' an insightful, sensitive and hard-hitting collection of paintings by Susanne Husemann, opens at Nomad today (Thursday), with German Ambassador Dr. Cyril Nunn performing the opening.

"Susanne probes beneath the surface and creates her own, powerful visual perspectives on life in this volatile, culturally and historically rich region, where she has now lived for some years," the gallery's curator Nageen Hyat stated at the exhibition's preview.

This is Susanne's second solo show at Nomad. "In my work, I think about home. What is home? It is not chosen but is simply there; as with identity or authenticity, it is not something that I can deliberate," the artist commented.

"Home is my culture, the history of art. The first step to this Vermeer series was to think about my history," Susanne said. Vermeer, she said, is a part of our history of art, one of the most famous painters in Europe. "But what is in a picture to make them special? And what is the significance of painting?" she asked, extending her thoughts to another frontier.

Susanne's style of painting, as described by Anil Datta in 'The News', can 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," he writes.

Susanne has been living in Pakistan for about a year. She shows pictures from different series about home. The first series of 'My Family' focuses on the 'burka,' a garment which provides interest and misunderstanding around the world. Most important in this series is the picture 'Blue Burka Band,' which shows an Afghan girl band singing critical songs about the 'burka.' The other series arose in Germany. It is about home in a historical context. Jan Vermeer pictures were the source material for this show.

Susanne's work has been exhibited in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Bochum (Germany), Glasgow, Edinburgh (Scotland), Schwerin (Poland), New York (USA), Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi (Pakistan), and Mian Yang (China). The exhibition will continue till February 9.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-228029-Hard-hitting-art-by-Susanne-goes-on-display>

## **Allegory and art**

Peerzada Salman — Published Oct 30, 2012 08:22pm

KARACHI, Oct 30: An exhibition of German artist Susanne Husemann's works titled 'Allegory of Painting' opened at the V.M. Art Gallery on Tuesday.

The show is part of the ongoing series of German cultural programmes in the city.

Since allegory is one of the many tools that poets use to propagate their ideas as painters usually employ symbols for the same purpose, it becomes all the more interesting when an artist tries to put across a point through allegorical interpretation. In such an artwork every character or event represents either an idea or a quality.

At the V.M. Art Gallery, oil on canvas, oil on cardboard and artworks done on wood series are on display. That's not where the charm of Ms Husemann's art lies. It is the remarkable nuggets from everyday, middleclass life that the artist has painted which makes the viewer marvel at her gift.

According to her statement, Susanne Husemann is inspired by the 17th century Dutch master Jan Vermeer. It is interesting to note that Vermeer did not enjoy the kind of success he richly deserved in his lifetime. Much like the English poet, John Donne, he was resurrected quite late after his death (19th century). The master's genius lay in his splendid delineation of middleclass household, particularly the interiors of their houses, and his mystique-laden depiction of the fair sex. 'The Allegory of Faith' and 'Art of Painting' are Vermeer's works that experts have categorised as his history paintings.

Susanne Husemann remains faithful to the master. Her depiction of such a lifestyle, coupled with a mysteriousness surrounding the characters, is worth viewing. 'Allegory of Painting 1' (oil on canvas) freezes a scene that draws not just a character in a certain setting but a whole environment signifying the socioeconomic section of society that the subject belongs to. The colours are dusky and shadowy, which enhance the ambience of the view.

In one of the 'Allegory of Painting' series, she paints a homespun picture. I say picture and not characters because that's what stands out from the artwork. It is the entirety of allegorical representation that strikes almost at the same time. And the lightness of shades in the background gels well with the theme of the picture.

'What is a Painting' (oil on cardboard) draws on the beauty of innocence, among other things. It is special stuff because the colours in the image play second fiddle to the girl's (subject) expression.

The exhibition will continue till Nov 10.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/760255/allegory-and-art>

**When old masters come alive**  
**By Anil Datta**

**Wednesday, October 31, 2012**



**When old masters come alive**

We all come into this world, live our allotted life span on the earth and then call it a day, in time to be forgotten and recede into oblivion. However, that may not hold good for all of us for there are those among us who through their sublime pursuits leave an indelible imprint on culture and civilization and every now and then they visit us through the enactment of their contribution to things sublime, be it music, art, invention, or what not.

It was the same Tuesday evening with an exhibition of paintings by the charming young artist from Germany, Susanne Husemann, themed “Allegory of painting”.

Husemann draws her inspiration from the 16th century Dutch painter Jan Vermeer who specialized in exquisite, domestic interior scenes of middle class life. Husemann’s endeavour is a variation on Vermeer’s themes. Fifteen of the works are oil-on-cardboard with sticker and tape, four are oil-on-canvas, and 14 oil-on-wood. All these works displayed at the V.M. Art Gallery speak a lot for her art and her subtle yet fertile imagination.

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. The paintings are actually based on clips from a movie about Vermeer, Hajo Euchting, with variations and improvisation by Susemann. One such work on display is “The girl with the earrings”, a reproduction of the clip from the movie about the master. It is an ideal representation of the clarity of human emotions which is reflected in the eyes of the girl. They are speaking eyes, with all credit going to Husemann’s creativity. The central theme of her art is the home.

She says about her work: “In my work I think about home. What is home? It is not chosen but is simply there. As with identity or authenticity, it is not something that I can deliberate.

Home is my culture, the history of art. The first step to this Vermeer series was to think about my history. Vermeer is a part of our history of art, one of the most famous painters of Europe”.

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.

## **Art exhibition: Wrestling with Vermeer**

By Sonia Malik

Published: May 25, 2012



Susanne Husemann's show opens at Rohtas 2, ends June 2.

### **LAHORE:**

Fifteenth century Dutch women engaged in chores are seen across many of Susanne Husemann's paintings. One is fixing another woman's scarf, another playing a violin while yet another sits on a food-laden table.

Husemann's inspiration is Jan Vermeer, a 15th century Dutch artist who specialises in scenes of domestic middle class life.

"I have let my creative abilities bring a vibrant and modern-day feel," she said of her Vermeer inspired pieces.

Allegory of Painting is a 33-piece exhibition which opened at Rohtas 2 on Thursday. Fifteen of the works are oil on cardboard, with stickers and tape, four are on canvas and 14 on wood. The exhibit will run till June 2.

A painting of a young girl playing the violin on a roughly cut out cardboard has a red tape vertically applied and the time of shipment. The piece, also Husemann's personal favourite, received much admiration from the gallery guests at the opening.

The artist said without the red tape and the date the painting would lack character. "It is like reincarnating a 500-year-old painting. It's like bringing an antique into the modern world," she said of her attempt to replicate the work with abstract touches on modern mediums like cardboard and wood.

"Cardboard takes a long time to dry with oil paints. Wood is a tough medium as you need high concentration to produce work on it," she said. She said she had been working on the pieces exhibited for the past two years. The paintings are priced between Rs21,000 and Rs162,000.

Vermeer, Husemann said was adept in handling effects and using bright colours in his work. "Despite his genius, he remains an understated artist. I had used Jan's pictures but have made it look more abstract," she said. The art inspired by Vermeer is "an amalgamation of the abstract and the concrete," she added.

Quddus Mirza, an artist and art critic, found the use of cardboard and wood paradoxical.

"As Vermeer has very few paintings to his credit, his work is considered precious. Husemann has used very mundane mediums such as cardboard and wood, making her work more approachable," he said. He said, "The paintings were particularly refreshing as artists in Pakistan never apply their own touches using another artist's work." "I see it as a creative comment on the European history of art. She has definitely set a very expressive benchmark by maneuvering oil cleverly on mediums as sensitive as cardboard and wood."

Husemann displayed her work at Islamabad's Namak Gallery two weeks ago and will display next month in Karachi. The show at Rohtas 2 ends June 2.

Published in The Express Tribune, May 25th, 2012.



## German artist's solo show goes on display

Drawn Islamabad

Published Apr 19, 2012

ISLAMABAD, April 18: German artist Susanne Husemann exhibited a collection of paintings featuring unique themes here Wednesday in a press preview at Nomad Art Gallery.

The display explored the culture and way of the artist's living in Europe with a series of works including 'what is a painting?'

Susanne Husemann studied art at the University of Arts Berlin and worked on various projects and exhibitions in different countries.

"In my work I think about home. What is home? It is not chosen but is simply there; as with identity or authenticity, it is not something that I can deliberate," the artist says about the works. She considers Vermeer (famous painter of Europe) her inspiration, whose art of painting was established as one of the most coveted paintings in western art.

The paintings remain opaque through their silence. Within Susanne variations, it is this aspect which is so stirring. The cropped half-face of the girl with the pearl earring, gazing from a carton of an Ikea Billy shelf and the runny black colour reveals the 17th century Dutch interiors. The exhibition will continue till May 3. — APP

<http://www.dawn.com/news/711726/german-artists-solo-show-goes-on-display>

## Exhibition: Recreating Vermeer, answering the big questions

By Our Correspondent

Published: April 20, 2012



The work of German artist Susanne Husemann showcased at Nomad. PHOTO: MYRA IQBAL

### ISLAMABAD:

German born Husemann uses oil on “cardboard” pieces to answer a question that has nagged her for years, “what is a picture?” In her work currently exhibiting at Nomad Gallery, Susanne Husemann has tried to recreate the split second of serenity captured by 17th century Dutch artist Johannes Vermeer.

She strives to question the very notion of defining things, people, places and even situations.

Though her work mostly involves recreating classic Vermeer paintings, including “The Girl with the Pearl Earring” or “The Lacemaker”, she paints them with her own perceptions. Striving to identify the exact moment of connection between the master painter and his subject, Husemann’s answers to her actions are simple. “Everyone is always drawn towards the eyes, I wanted to take that away and have people concentrate on something else,” she said.

The use of cardboard as the chosen material is also of course not without reasons— “I want my art to be more approachable.”

While pointing to letters imprinted on the cardboard that can be seen underneath the paint (which is intentional), she says that the letters remind of the fact that everything has a history behind it and a story to tell.

Using soft yellows, whites and greens with a light blue grey hue acting as the base for her pieces, she adds a touch of spice with a dash of bright red that blends in easily with the otherwise bold brush strokes. Fifteen smaller pieces, part of the “stills” on wood series are also showcased. The exhibition continues till May 3.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 20th, 2012.

## German artist explores Vermeer's classic art through modern lens

Our correspondent

Thursday, April 19, 2012

Islamabad

An international art exhibition by Susanne Husemann, a gifted contemporary artist trained in Berlin, Germany, opens at the Nomad Art Gallery today (Thursday).

The exhibition offers 29 oil paintings on cardboard and will formally be inaugurated by Stephan Roken, Charge d' Affaires of the German Embassy in Islamabad.

Susanne has had exposure to various cultures and has participated in numerous exhibitions in Germany, Poland, Scotland, Italy and the United States. "In my work, I think about home. What is home? It is not chosen but is simply there; as with identity or authenticity, it is not something that I can deliberate. Home is my culture," the artist articulates in a written statement.

Taking a reference from Vermeer, one of the most famous painters in Europe, Susanne embarks upon a journey to explore her own history. "The first step to this Vermeer series was to think about my history. Vermeer is a part of our history of art. But what is in a picture to make them special? And what is the significance of painting?" It is questions like these that the artist has set out to raise and answer through her art.

"Susanne has looked at Vermeer's classic work through a contemporary lens, which makes it very interesting. There is a lot of subtlety and creativity in her work," the gallery's director Nageen Hyat commented at the exhibition's preview. Indeed, while Susanne's style is classic, the mood is modern and upbeat. The exhibition includes 12 small paintings executed in black and white, with a touch of colour. In these works, the artist has sketched movie scenes in oil pastel. The paintings have a different but inspiring character.

Susanne will be available at the gallery for the inauguration. She will be interacting with local artists, sharing with them, the details of her life and work. The artist is currently living in Pakistan with her husband, who works in the German embassy. The exhibition will continue till May 3.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-6-103759-German-artist-explores-Vermeers-classic-art-through-modern-lens>