

City As Canvas: Analysis of Street Painting in Lahore

Dr. Sidra Liaquat

sidraliaquat48@gmail.com

Assistant Professor, Visual Arts Department, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan

Corresponding Author: * Dr. Sidra Liaquat sidraliaquat48@gmail.com

Received: 12-07-2025	Revised: 22-08-2025	Accepted: 17-09-2025	Published: 22-10-2025
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ABSTRACT

Street painting as one of the public art forms has emerged in the contemporary age as a medium of communication with public, in addition to enhancing the urban spaces. The idea of street painting in Lahore arose as an anti-wall chalking campaign in 2010, under the Street Art Pakistan which is run by Mudassir Zia. This organization aims to educate the public about the local cultures, traditions, and national values through the street paintings. This research article intends to analyze the street paintings executed in Lahore and their impact on the citizens. The space, location, medium, and the mindset of the artist as well as the local viewer play an important role in defining the significance of public artwork. The comparative analysis of the street paintings of Lahore with the Western, South East Asian and Indian street paintings puts forth the weaknesses in the former, highlighting the measures required for the improvement, and comprehending the significance of street paintings and their role in the urban society. The impact of street painting on the naïve and experienced viewers is traced through the interviews at the selected sites in Lahore. Moreover, discussion with Mudassir Zia supports the analysis. Basing on all the reviews, this research evaluates the street painting and its impact to present the suggestive measures for its betterment in the future.

Keywords: Street painting, public art, urban spaces, naïve viewers, experienced viewers, suggestive measures.

INTRODUCTION

Street painting is among the many forms of street art which are accessible for the public on the streets and outer walls of the buildings, other than the conventional art sites. The urban Lahore with its heavily busy streets and polluted atmosphere is a source of distress for the citizens. Moreover, wall chalking has been a means of visual communication for the underprivileged who do not have adequate means to convey their thoughts to the authorities, and for the advertisements. The public spaces with such faces, hence, present an unappealing, rather obnoxious, side of the city.

To wipe out the negative impact due to wall chalking, an organization named Street Art Pakistan took an initiative in 2010, with a thought to present positive aspects of the country, beautifying its face, avoiding wall chalking and to create an awareness among the common man. The themes of these murals revolve around the culture and tradition of Pakistan and its provinces, the depictions of the historical monuments, truck art motifs, folk dance and music (figs. 1-8). Moreover, patriotic values, national achievements and national heroes are portrayed along with the depictions for the promotion of peace, freedom, cleanliness and health (figs. 9-15) (Street Art Pakistan, n.d.).

The present research aims to analyze the street paintings of Lahore with an endeavor to investigate the efforts put on this project, and then to suggest the measures for the betterment. For this purpose, comparative analysis with the street paintings of the West, South East Asian countries and India provides an insight into the significance of street paintings and their role in the society.



Figure 1. Culture and tradition of Pakistan, 2019, Wahdat Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 2. Basant culture in Pakistan, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 3. Cultural game Polo, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 4. Historical monuments of Pakistan, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 5. Truck art motifs, 2019, Wahdat Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 6. Folk dance, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 7. Music of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 8. Malka-e-tarannum Noor Jahan, 2019, Wahdat Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 9. Patriotic values, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 10. National achievements, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 11. National achievements, 2019, Wahdat Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 12. Peace, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.
 (Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 13. National heroes, 2019, Wahdat Road, Lahore.
(Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 14. Clean and green Pakistan, 2019, Wahdat Road, Lahore.
(Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 15. Edhi Foundation Ambulance Service, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.
(Source: Photograph by author).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Riggle (2010) states that street is a public site and any artwork executed on the street and making the street part of the artwork, physically or contextually, is street art. He lays emphasis on creating a meaningful link between artwork and the street. Unlike museum art, street art directly engages with everyday life.

Young (2014) discusses the challenges brought about by street art, which is an integral urban component of the big cities in the Western countries. Despite its aesthetic significance, sometimes the law and legal aspects are overlooked. The book presents an exploration into the history of this art form, in addition to the experiences of street artists and those of the viewers.

Avramidis & Tsilimpounidi (2016) study the change in perception regarding street art and graffiti. They examine the street artist's conception, public's understanding of the visual, and subsequently the way city is represented. They relate this three-stage process with a scholarly work as the ideas and execution lead to altering the general perception of a space and its memory.

Molnár (2017) examines how digital technology has impacted the street art. Although digital social networks have contributed to the popularity of street art, yet the purpose of street art is compromised. The objective of street art to visually communicate with the local public is now largely taken over by digital social media, thus altering the urban concepts.

Forte and De Paola (2019) overview the urban spaces of Naples and discuss street art in relation to its economic impact on the market of property. While Gonçalves & Milani (2022) argue that street art that was once considered a vandalistic act has now gained acceptance and recognition. They highlight the legal and illegal aspects related to street art, besides discussions on appropriate selection of the sites which are visible to the public, its commercialization, as well as social and urban significance.

The literature emphasizes street art as multidimensional urban practice where aesthetics, artist's expression, visual communication, and spatial aspects interplay. Despite a rich scholarship on the evolution of street art in the West, there remains a significant gap in literature regarding the street art of Pakistan – particularly Lahore. The article addresses this gap through an in-depth study of the street art in Lahore.

Contextual Review

The origin of public art dates back to the Stone Age. The need to express oneself publicly laid the foundation of this powerful tool of visual communication. The evolutionary phases, centuries after centuries, and modern-day globalization and urbanization has immensely affected the mode of communication through art. In the modern times the emergence of street art as a means of socio-political

commentary is recorded during the World War II, which then continued and flourished to adopt various forms (Sadatiseyedmahalleh, Rahman, & Abdullah, 2015, p. 182). Street art has faced a great shift in the contemporary period from being an illegal activity to an aesthetic means of communication with the local public in an urban society. It is now serving for “*adorning the urban as furniture of the city*” (Sadatiseyedmahalleh, Rahman, & Abdullah, 2015, p. 183).

The street paintings of the West present skillful, appealing, inspiring and thought-provoking visuals. Graffiti art, the form of street art done illegally on public site, from the West is politicized e.g. the paintings by an anonymous English artist Banksy (fig. 16) (Street Art Bio, n.d.). Some of the best examples of street art can be seen in the countries like England, Portugal, Germany, France, Spain, Poland, Belgium, Austria, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Denmark and America (figs. 17-29) (Graffiti Kings, n.d.). The Western street art intends to ornate the public sites of the cities and to interact with all the social classes of the public to elicit their aesthetic responses.

Developed in the West, the street art traveled to other parts of the world, notably South East Asia. George Town in Malaysia presents some of the most notable examples of street art telling tales about the past to the present generation (figs. 30-31) (Freme Travel, 2017). Done on the defaced walls, these paintings serve to create a vintage visual with the real objects installed against the painted wall depicting children in some activity.

The streets in Kampong Glam, Singapore, are flanked by colorfully painted walls of the shops, giving an impression as if a huge painted canvas is pierced with door and window openings (fig. 32). Indonesian city Jakarta is famous for the promotion of street art. The streets here are painted during Jakarta Biennale and portray the livelihood of the common man (fig. 33). Taipei in Taiwan has remarkable street paintings on the exterior of the buildings, with exuberantly vibrant colors, attracting particularly the youth (fig. 34). Other prominent examples are found in Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia and South Korea (figs. 35-38) (Freme Travel, 2017). The paintings in these South East Asian countries are done by the professional street artists.

In South Asia, India has well executed street paintings which are done with the collaboration of some twenty countries including Germany, Poland, Singapore, and Switzerland, along with NGOs, cultural institutions and brands like Asian Paints, in four major cities i.e. Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru. Foreign artists with an experience in street painting along with the Indian artists have created masterpieces in the residential areas as well as on the streets (figs. 39-45) (Langar, 2017). The Content Director of non-profit Street Art India Foundation at Delhi, Akshat Nauriyal, mentions the shortcoming of the gallery culture in which the art is only accessible to a specific social class, whereas the art on public places has the advantage to communicate and interact with the common public who now feel pride in the presentable localities and strive to keep them clean. Apart from being relevant to the social issues and local narratives, these paintings have an aesthetic appeal to induce an optimistic response among the locals, thus evolving an urban design (Langar, 2017).



Figure 16. Graffiti by



Figure 17. Street painting by



Figure 18. Street painting by

anonymous English artist
 Banksy.
 (Source: <https://www.streetartbio.com/artists/banksy/>).



Figure 19. Street painting by Tinho, Frankfurt, Germany.
 (Source: <https://graffitikings.co.uk/12-best-cities-europe-street-art/>).

Jody, Bristol, England.
 (Source: <https://graffitikings.co.uk/12-best-cities-europe-street-art/>).



Figure 20. Street painting in Paris, France.
 (Source: <https://www.st-christophers.co.uk/travel-tips/blogs/2017/the-7-best-street-art-spots-in-europe>).

Astro, Lisbon, Portugal.
 (Source: <https://graffitikings.co.uk/12-best-cities-europe-street-art/>).



Figure 21. Street painting in Granada, Spain.
 (Source: <https://graffitikings.co.uk/12-best-cities-europe-street-art/>).



Figure 22. Street painting by Aryz, Lodz, Poland.
 (Source: <https://graffitikings.co.uk/12-best-cities-europe-street-art/>).



Figure 23. Street art in Ghent, Belgium.
 (Source: <https://eternalarrival.com/uncategorized/12-best-cities-street-art-europe/>).



Figure 24. Street painting by Nychos, Linz, Austria.
 (Source: <https://graffitikings.co.uk/12-best-cities-europe-street-art/>).



Figure 25. Street art in Athens, Greece.
 Source: <https://eternalarrival.com/uncategorized/12-best-cities-street-art-europe/>.



Figure 26. Street art in Belfast, Ireland.
 Source: <https://eternalarrival.com/uncategorized/12-best-cities-street-art-europe/>.



Figure 27. Street painting in Amsterdam, Netherlands.
 (Source: <https://www.st-christophers.co.uk/travel-tips/blogs/2017/the-7-best-street-art-spots-in-europe>).



Figure 28. Street painting in Copenhagen, Denmark.
 Source: <https://www.st-christophers.co.uk/travel-tips/blogs/2017/the-7-best-street-art-spots-in-europe>.



Figure 29. Street art in Latin America.
 Source: <http://www.3rdculturekid.net/en/incredible-street-art-latin-america/>.



Figure 30. Street art in Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia.
 (Source: <https://www.freme.com/9-best-street-art-cities-southeast-asia/>).



Figure 31. Street art in Georgetown, Penang, Malaysia.
 (Source: <https://www.freme.com/9-best-street-art-cities-southeast-asia/>).



Figure 32. Street art in Kampong Glam, Singapore.
 (Source: <https://www.freme.com/9-best-street-art-cities-southeast-asia/>).



Figure 33. Street art in Jakarta, Indonesia.
 (Source: <https://www.freme.com/9-best-street-art-cities-southeast-asia/>).



Figure 34. Street art in Taipei, Taiwan.
 (Source: <https://www.freme.com/9-best-street-art-cities-southeast-asia/>).



Figure 35. Street art in Taguig, Philippines.
 (Source: <https://www.freme.com/9-best-street-art-cities-southeast-asia/>).



Figure 36. Street art in Phuket, Thailand.
 (Source: <https://www.freme.com/9-best-street-art-cities-southeast-asia/>).



Figure 37. *Black Palace Bokor*, Street art in Kampot and Kep, Cambodia.



Figure 38. Mural in Ihwa Mural Village, South Korea.
 (Source: <https://www.freme.com/9-best-street-art-cities-southeast-asia/>).



Figure 39. *The Origin of the World* by Borondo, Lodhi Colony, Delhi, India.

(Source: <https://expertabroad.com/street-art-in-asia/>).



Figure 40. *Vishvaroopa* by Inkbrushme, Lodhi Colony, Delhi, India.

(Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/876705/this-street-art-foundation>).

<https://expertabroad.com/street-art-in-asia/>).



Figure 41. Street art by Senkoe, Arjangerh Metro Station, Delhi, India.

(Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/876705/this-street-art-foundation>).

(Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/876705/this-street-art-foundation>).



Figure 42. *Unusual Usual* by Do and Khatra, Hyderabad, India.

(Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/876705/this-street-art-foundation>).



Figure 43. *Fusion* by Rakesh Kumar Memrot, Lodhi Colony, Delhi, India.

(Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/876705/this-street-art-foundation>).



Figure 44. *Gandhi Mural* by Hendrik Beikirchand Anpu Varkey, Delhi, India.

(Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/876705/this-street-art-foundation>).



Figure 45. *Dadasaheb Phalke* by Ranjit Dhaiya MTNL Building, Mumbai, India.

(Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/876705/this-street-art-foundation>).

Street Painting in Lahore

In Pakistan street art as an anti-wall chalking campaign started primarily from Lahore in 2010 to record the impact on wall chalking and also to develop the public art (M. Zia, personal communication, August 28, 2019). It expanded in the successive years and now it has been executed in almost twenty-four cities covering all the provinces of Pakistan, but its impact has not reached the level that earlier mentioned countries have achieved. A cultural hub and now a victim of urbanization, the city of Lahore provides a mirror into the transformations underwent under successive reigns. From the architectural surface decoration of the Mughals imparting the supremacy, to the Sikh frescoes telling episodic tales, the royal art has transformed into the public art today. The foreign tourists to the city of Lahore experience both the types of public art i.e. in the walled city and in the urban city, and have different aesthetic responses towards the two.

Street Art Pakistan collaborates with Master Paints and Government of Pakistan to organize national level competitions which are open for art students, professional artists as well as for anyone interested from all

over the country. The government organizations like Lahore Development Authority and DC Office are mostly accessed for the permissions to use the public places. The overall investment on this project done each year in Lahore is three to four million rupees (minimum) on four locations (M. Zia, personal communication, August 28, 2019). The teams of participants, from colleges, universities and different institutes, are invited to submit a proposed sketch for the mural, which are then shortlisted by the team of Street Art Pakistan, which afterwards allocate the walls to the participating teams. After the many hours of painting, these murals are evaluated by the judges and the winning teams are awarded with cash prizes.

The commissioning, sponsoring and collaborating bodies have a limited influence on the murals by restricting the participants within the specified themes in which they are free to portray the way they best can. Some of the walls, after intervals, are however used by the sponsoring body for its promotion (figs. 46-47). The founder and CEO of Street Art Pakistan, Mudassir Zia, mentions that the organization focuses on the promotion of positive image of the country and discourages the images having any negativity or vandalism. He gives the example of the portrait of Naeem Rashid, a victim of New Zealand mosque attack 2019, painted on Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, creating an awareness regarding the issues faced by foreign Pakistani Muslims and to pay tribute to the martyred (fig. 48).

The criteria for the selection of sketches for street paintings, Zia explains, is based on the given themes and on judgement of the skill to transfer the A3 sized sketched image on a larger surface. He states that selection of sketches before the execution of painting is quite tough, in which the experts' judgement of the painting to be executed fails in forty percent of the entries. The members of the team of experts are the artists from various art institutes of Lahore including mainly National College of Arts and Punjab University College of Art and Design, along with the volunteers from Lahore College for Women University and Naqsh School of Art. Whereas the jury members for the final evaluation of paintings and award nomination are the professional artists from different art fields who judge the skill of painting and expertise in delivering the idea under the specified theme (M. Zia, personal communication, August 28, 2019).

The critical observation of these murals reveals that the placement of the paintings on the alternating walls do not accord aesthetically or with regard to the subject matter. Most of them just appear at random, break the harmony for the passing viewers, and are not inter-related. Thus, showing the lack of placement skill of the organizing body. For instance, on Wahdat Road, a polo player with his horse seems just about to run through the portrait of pioneer Pakistani artist Saeed Akhtar (fig. 49). However, according to Zia, the team of artists tries the best to synchronize the images with regard to their placement, yet on some points it is hard for the team to place the paintings with relevance to each other, because of a large number of paintings. Though the themes are limited but every team comes up with a different aspect within that theme, which causes difficulty in synchronization (M. Zia, personal communication, August 28, 2019).

Some of the portraits, including that of Saeed Akhtar (though a replica), do depict the expertise in the technique, others including the portraits of Abdul Sattar Edhi and Sadequain (figs. 49-51). The figure compositions are nevertheless quite weak and lack the knowledge of the basic compositional devices and rendered childlike (fig. 52). The architectural monuments are painted in a way that they lose their grandeur, imparting a negative impact on the foreign tourists who also visit the actual monuments (fig. 53). Among the paintings of 2016 and 2019, some panels of the truck art motifs catch greater attention than other paintings (fig. 54). The designs are rendered in the same way as do the truck artists. An overall examination of the surviving painted walls leaves an unappealing impression and questions the impacts of the paintings of the previous years. Most of the painted walls of the preceding years have been defaced due to the harsh weather of this region and limited outdoor life of the paint used. Such walls are white-

washed to make them ready for the competitions of the upcoming years (M. Zia, personal communication, August 28, 2019).

A portrait of Quaid-e-Azam measuring seventy feet in height and 2100 square feet, produced in 2016 at Jinnah Hospital by four art students from Punjab University, is a great success so far (fig. 55) (Street Art Pakistan, 2017). Though, it is now washed away because of weather conditions, yet it must have a sound impact on the viewers. This portrait of Quaid-e-Azam seems to be a source of arising a patriotic feel and a reminder of the efforts behind the independent country. This portrait was anticipated by the many (comparatively smaller) portraits of national heroes stenciled in green against the white wall on the Independence Day in 2015 (fig. 56) (Street Art Pakistan, n.d.).

The most notable mural in the history of Street Art Pakistan is the one executed at MS Garrison Underpass, Lahore, in 2014, measuring the largest i.e. 30,000 square feet, and based on the theme of “*Timeline of the History of Pakistan Army from 1914-2014 (World War 1 to Operation Zarb-e-Azb), celebrating a hundred years of 10th Division of Army*” (figs. 57-58). This mural underwent restoration in 2016 and now restored every year (fig. 59) (M. Zia, personal communication, August 28, 2019).

Street Art Pakistan also strived to achieve world recognition by painting the *Largest Painting by Numbers* and getting registered in Guinness World Record in 2013 (fig. 60). However the painting is quite simple in rendering of flat colored shapes to form the monuments of Pakistan. Earlier in 2012, *World's Largest Painting of National Flag* was painted by the participants at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore (figs. 61-62) (M. Zia, personal communication, August 28, 2019). On this flag were painted the various themes regarding cultural, national and social values of Pakistan.

The inclination of the organizing body towards getting worldly acclaimed, as observed in the successive years of street painting, has distracted the primary focus of the project proving to deteriorate the main objective of Street Art Pakistan.

The street paintings are meant to impact the local citizens in a way that they give a presentable appearance of the city apart from conveying multiple messages and eliminating the wall chalking, rather than just a competition. In addition, the street paintings, according to Zia can be viewed as public gallery for those who do not get the opportunity to access the art galleries. Also, the art students can get a chance to work on a larger level on public places. Adding more, he stated that there is no such youth activity on such a large scale in Pakistan purely for the society and the public, other than the street art project. He revealed that the funds generated from the street art project are used to run a school in Lahore for underprivileged children named The National School established by Zia himself in 2008. At the moment 270 students are studying there up till eighth grade, who are also encouraged to contribute for the betterment of the society (M. Zia, personal communication, August 28, 2019).

The location and placement of a painting with respect to the others and the perception of the viewer play an important role in determining the significance of the public artwork. To study the impact of the surviving street paintings in Lahore done in the years 2016 and 2019, the research includes the views of five experienced viewers and five naïve viewers, by visiting the selected sites.



Figure 46. Use of the wall by sponsoring body, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.

(Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 49. Irrelevant placement of themes, 2019, Wahdat Road, Lahore.

(Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 52. Figure composition, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.

(Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 55. Portrait of Quaid-e-Azam, 2016, Jinnah Hospital, Lahore.

(Source: <http://sac.artistan.pk/?p=7991>).

Figure 47. Use of the wall by sponsoring and collaborating bodies, 2019, Wahdat Road, Lahore.

(Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 50. Portrait of Abdul Sattar Edhi, 2019, Main Boulevard Allama Iqbal Town, Lahore.

(Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 53. Architectural monuments of Pakistan, 2016, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.

(Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 56. Tribute to national heroes on August 14, 2015.

(Source: "<http://sac.artistan.pk/?portfolio=tribute-to-national-heroes-on-14th-august-2015>").

Figure 48. Portrait of martyred Naeem Rashid, 2019, Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, Lahore.

(Source: <https://www.imgrum.pw/media/2006716747400745262>).



Figure 51. Portrait of Sadequain, 2019, Main Boulevard Allama Iqbal Town, Lahore.

(Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 54. Truck art motifs, 2019, Wahdat Road, Lahore.

(Source: Photograph by author).



Figure 57. Operation art – A tribute to Pak Army, 2014, MS Garrison Underpass, Lahore.

(Source: <http://sac.artistan.pk/?portfolio=operation-art-a-tribute-to-pak-army>).



Figure 58. Operation art – A tribute to Pak Army, 2014, MS Garrison Underpass, Lahore.
 (Source: <http://sac.artistan.pk/?portfolio=operation-art-a-tribute-to-pak-army>).



Figure 59. Mural restoration at MS Garrison Underpass, Lahore, 2016.
 (Source: <http://sac.artistan.pk/?portfolio=renovation-of-ms-garrison-underpass-lahore>).



Figure 60. Largest painting by numbers, 2013, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore.
 (Source: <http://sac.artistan.pk/?portfolio=guinness-world-record-largest-painting-by-numbers>).



Figure 61. World's largest painting of national flag, 2012, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore.
 (Source: <http://sac.artistan.pk/?portfolio=worlds-largest-painting-of-national-flag>).



Figure 62. Close-up of the world's largest painting of national flag, 2012, Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore.
 (Source: <http://sac.artistan.pk/?portfolio=worlds-largest-painting-of-national-flag>).

Views of Experienced Viewers

- A participant of the Street Art Competition 2011, mentioned that it is a good initiative for the better presentation of the city walls, but with every passing year the paintings are losing the interest. This may be because there are no examples in our country for the participants to follow (Personal communication, June 30, 2019).
- An art student from Lahore College for Women University stated that the street paintings in Lahore are not up to the mark. Though the idea of street painting is influenced from the West, yet the execution is weak, compositions do not adhere to the principles of art, and there is nothing innovative on the part of the young participants. Images are borrowed but presented unaesthetically. According to her, the street paintings should convey some message to the lay man, which these paintings are unable to convey because they lack the capability to appeal the viewers (Personal communication, June 27, 2019).
- A graduate from Home Economics College said that previously wall chalking and poster pasting imparted a negative impact on the citizens and foreigners. Though the street paintings are not executed skillfully, yet they have changed the cityscape of some areas of Lahore and have contributed in maintaining city's presentation (Personal communication, June 28, 2019).
- An art educationist and visual art practitioner from Lahore suggested that street painting should be taught at the graduate level as a separate subject to create a better understanding of this art form. This

way the streets of Lahore will be able to experience competent art works as never before (Personal communication, June 24, 2019).

- An art collector commented that the contemporary street painting lacks the expertise and deficient in visual communication. These painting, in no way, can be compared to the public murals of the great Pakistani masters like Sadequain (Personal communication, June 27, 2019).

Views of Naïve Viewers

- A rickshaw driver stated that the street paintings, although beautiful, are a source of distraction for the drivers. He mentioned a minor accident that he caused during driving while he was watching the painted wall (Personal communication, July 5, 2019).
- A passerby on the Wahdat Road said that instead of investing on these walls which will soon be defaced because of weather conditions, the authorities should pay attention towards the establishment of educational institutes (Personal communication, July 5, 2019).
- Another passerby on Model Town Circular Road, said that though these paintings are attractive but they least interest the common man who has many issues unsolved (Personal communication, July 6, 2019).
- A worker of Edhi Foundation on the Main Boulevard Allama Iqbal Town, was of the view that the street paintings are a source of awareness for the specific interested public, while for the remaining public these are just painted walls (Personal communication, July 5, 2019).
- An educated car driver on Maulana Shaukat Ali Road, having no art background, mentioned the street painting of Berlin, Germany which are awe-inspiring, to which the street paintings of Lahore are incomparable. He suggested that authorities should organize workshops with German street artists as trainers of the local students for the major improvement in skill and ideas (Personal communication, July 5, 2019).

In this context Zia said that in 2016 five international street artists were invited from Germany, Ukraine and America, who conducted workshops in National College of Arts and Beaconhouse National University, and also painted twenty-five feet sized murals in the Doctors Colony of Allama Iqbal Medical College, free of charge. Because of the lack of large sized walls in the city, these murals were implemented within the colony (M. Zia, personal communication, August 28, 2019).

The Street Art Pakistan organizes competitions in various cities of Pakistan. But the more it is expanding its coverage, the more it is losing its targeted focus. Also, with every passing year, the participant art students are losing their interest. Both these factors are responsible for the weakening of the skilled execution of the murals. The paintings of the earlier years depict the enthusiasm of the participants in the expertise and those paintings were more focused towards the aim. The gradual lack in interest is, to a great extent, on part of the organizing body, which holds the competition more like a burden to continue the pattern of the previous years. However, a little change in the themes, flexibility in medium and surface, and an encouragement to think outside the box, can induce participants' interest. Nevertheless, some of the paintings do depict the dedication towards the aim of Street Art Pakistan, like the portraits of the nation's heroes, including that of Martyred Naeem Rashid, which surely are a progress in street painting.

Talking about the weaknesses regarding the street painting in Pakistan, Zia mentioned the short comings that Pakistani street art is facing. The unavailability of the equipment like cherry pickers and lack of coordination from the authorities for accessing the public sites and from the owner of the building, are to a great extent responsible for the hindrance in the development of street art. The building owners prefer to utilize the outer wall of the site for commercial purposes instead of for the public art. Moreover, he states that architecture of our public sites is quite different from the architecture of the West which makes it difficult to execute large sized murals. Adding further he states that Pakistan does not lack professional

artists who can help develop the street art, but these artists have a commercial approach, due to which Street Art Pakistan is unable to hire them (M. Zia, personal communication, August 28, 2019).

The comparison of the street paintings of Lahore with the Western, South East Asian and Indian Street paintings with regards to the execution, aesthetic appeal, subject matter and impact on the viewers, brings into account the role of the organizing and collaborating bodies. In Lahore, the major aim of these paintings is to avoid wall chalking and present an appealing face of the city. While the idea of creating an awareness of the social issues and conveying constructive thoughts among the local public is left behind. However, wall chalking, ironically is a result of the need of the local public to communicate in the form of visuals. Any form of discouragement against wall chalking has not proved to be effective in our society. If not the walls of the city, the tree trunks become the victims. The measures need to be taken for organizing workshops for these local wall chalkers to convert their urge into an aesthetic skill.

Street paintings can be made better aesthetically and conceptually by involving the professional artists on honorary or hired basis and by arranging workshops under experienced artists. The mature treatment of the given themes will contribute to improve the impact on the local public and their responses as responsible citizens. Furthermore, the teams of participants involved in the street painting need to be well-scrutinized, and only competent ones should be encouraged. Also, up to five participants, who still are art students with different styles of painting, when work on the same wall, emphasize more on completing the given task on time rather than collaborating with each other. Hence, the scrutinized participants should be consigned a specific team according to their painting styles to keep up with the objectives. Moreover, the needs of the given locality or area should be identified according to the residing locals so that the messages could be conveyed more effectively. The architecture of the country also needs to be taken in consideration when executing the street paintings. In addition, the models of Western, South East Asian and Indian streets can provide a direction and leading path towards a striking visual impact.

CONCLUSION

Street Art Pakistan in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan and Master Paints has taken a good initiative to create an awareness among the local public regarding urban design development. Though much of the wall chalking has been controlled through street paintings in Lahore, yet some of the deprived localities still face this issue.

Having an objective to induce responsiveness among the common man regarding the culture, tradition, social issues, peace, cleanliness and health, the street painting lack the capability to appeal the masses because of their unaesthetic execution. Moreover, a particular issue can be more focused by avoiding painting the continuing wall with different and non-interrelated themes, thus emphasizing on one specific objective. The aesthetic appeal should be added to these paintings to attract the onlookers effecting their sensibility and responsiveness towards the building of developed urban society. The action on the suggestions mentioned in the article will be beneficial in the improvement of the street painting and its impact on the citizens. The contribution of the authorities in making the required equipment available will be a great support in establishing the street art as an influential medium of social communication and urban design development.

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