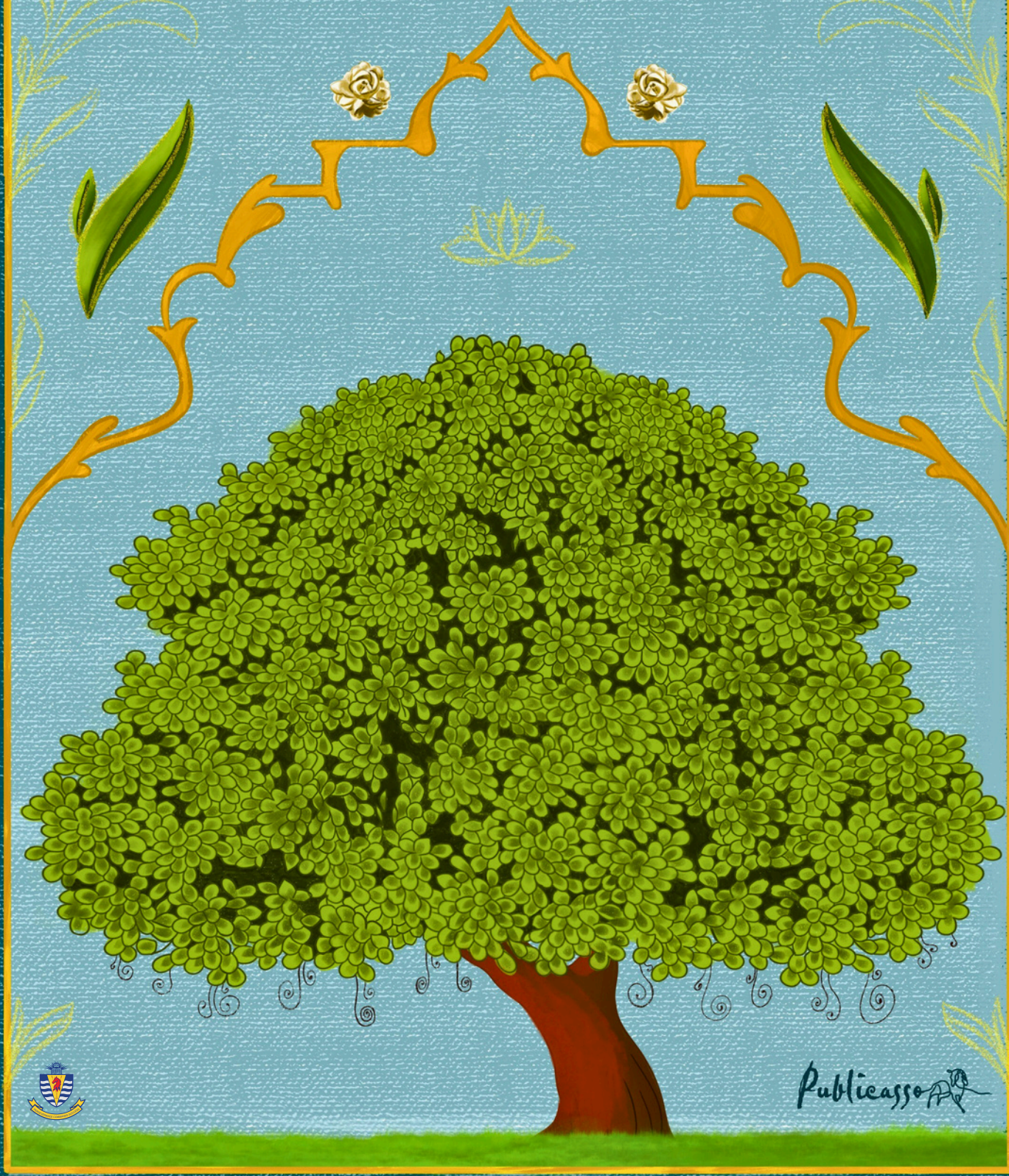
Publicasso

Aitchison College Art Magazine



Faraan

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Foreword

A Note From Our Staff Advisors

Ma'am Sara and Ma'am Qurrat
Art and Media Society Staff Advisors

As the staff advisors for the Art Society and supporters of this entire project, we find ourselves completely enraptured by this magazine. Art has always been a powerful way for people to express ideas, emotions, and perspectives that words alone cannot capture. Within these pages, you will find a collection of work that reflects the imagination, skill and individuality of our students. We hope that as you turn these pages, you take a moment to appreciate the creativity, dedication and vision behind each article. May this collection inspire you to look more closely at the world, think more deeply about art, music, fashion and culture, and perhaps even create something of your own.

A Note From Our President

Waleed Ahmed Yousaf
Art and Media Society President

Publicasso was a project that had been brewing in my mind since I joined the Art & Media Society back in 2022, and seeing it finally come to life as the Society's first ever publication feels incredibly rewarding! Launching this first edition is our way of leaving a legacy for future members, a foundation upon which the Society can continue to grow and evolve.

This achievement would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our editorial board, whose creativity and attention to detail have shaped every page. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our staff advisors Ma'am Sara and Ma'am Qurrat, whose guidance, encouragement, and support have been invaluable throughout the entire process.

The goal of Publicasso is to offer readers an engaging window into any and all facets of art, and I am confident that, with each year, it will continue to grow stronger and even more representative of the Art & Media Society's vision. I hope you enjoy this first edition as much as we enjoyed creating it!

Editor's Note

Aalyan Iqbal
Publicasso Chief-Editor

I just go with the flow, I follow the yellow brick road. I don't know where it's going to lead me, but I follow it." — Grace Jones

This is one of my favorite quotes and the mindset we had going into the magazine. Publicasso is the first ever art magazine for the college. This meant that we had to create a legacy worth upholding, even many years from now. My team and I knew to remain polished but still take risks and have fun! The magazine has come out to be a direct representation of our hard work, a euphoric cluster of experiences.

I'm incredibly grateful for my team: Saraan for pushing himself further than he has ever before, Rafay for being such a talented writer, Sirmed for his skills, and Ali for his ideas. I'm thankful for Waleed, for being a great president and friend. Ma'am Sara and Ma'am Qurrat, I owe you a debt of gratitude for helping me reach my full potential as an artist and for supporting my journey as editor-in-chief.

I hope you, the reader, immerse yourself into the world of artistic journalism and take in our gorgeous designs. Thank you!

Meet The Team

Aalyan Iqbal, Cheif Editor
Likes: Funk and news comics
Dislikes: Chewing gum

Saraan Waqas, Sub-Editor
Likes: K-pop, painting, ramen
Dislikes: Brown

Rafay Ali, Sub-Editor
Likes: Clairo, diet coke, Laurel Canyon
Dislikes: Pretentious poetry

Sirmed Mahmood, Designer
Likes: Graphic Design
Dislikes: Red

Ali Arif Piracha, Sub-Editor
Likes: Music and Fashion
Dislikes: Gray

ArtFest 2025

Art Fest 2025, the flagship event of the Aitchison College Arts Society took place on the 17th and 18th of October, boasting 17 categories across 4 distinct divisions: Visual Arts, Media Arts, Performing Arts and Art Discourse; there's something for everyone!

Students channelled their inner P(ubl)icasso and showed off their artistic skills, painting/drawing/sketching/sculpting/capturing their hearts out, many even performed till perfection, reveling in the praise coming from the live audience and to those who think the latter seem a bit too artsy and performy, debating might be more down their lane. Many participants came only to cheer on their friends, or eat food (funny), speaking of which, Aitchison practically had their own little food street in the assembly area, people flocking to get something to fill their stomachs after hours and hours of creating art.
After all the buzz, delegates gathered in our grand Amphitheatre, listened to cool people perform and pretended to know them to seem even more cool.

And then came the moment every delegate had been anticipating, the Closing Ceremony where everyone can be a winner (if you're good enough) and hey, if an entire school's delegation was equally talented you might even have had a shot of winning the coveted Best Delegation award, which got you a majestic trophy and bragging rights.

Looking back, the event was an explosion of color (we thank our clothes and aprons for their service), one thing is undeniable; Art Fest was an experience to remember, 48 hours of pure chaos fueled by artistic drive and raw talent, we hope you enjoyed the event as much as we enjoyed meticulously planning it.

Founders Day art exhibition 2026

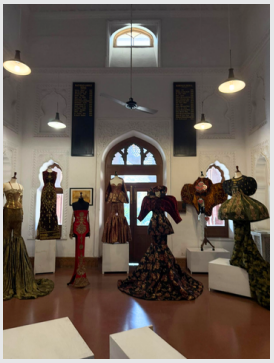
The entrance of the old building stood grand, displaying various, intricate art pieces with pride, with the architecture of the building itself mimicking the complexities of the paintings inside. The large oak doors captivated anyone who walked past them, giving a teaser of what lay inside, inviting all to come and witness the raw talent and beauty that encompassed the Art Fest Old Boys Exhibition.

The insides of the building were adorned with canvas from head to toe, almost like a desi Sistine Chapel. Celebrating 140 years of Aitchison College, Founders Day 2026 showcased the annual art exhibition, the main hall showed off all the hard work of artsy old boys, while simultaneously the paintings acted as a physical manifestation; for the love every single Ex - Aitchisonian still had for their beloved college in their hearts, whether old or recent graduates, their contributions acted as an act of appreciation and loyalty towards their school, where they spent their formative years.

Now for our less artistically-inclined editor, Rafay's view on the exhibition:

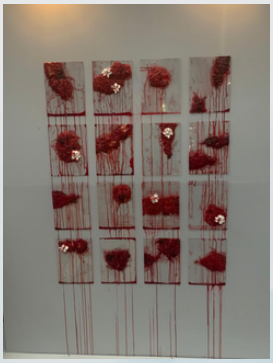
The wall wore a shelf, spread with distinct tarot cards, creating an air of mystique and mystery, almost as if inviting the observer to take a closer look, the vibrant red background casting an ominous glow as the tiny, carved room remained in place, haunting the hall menacingly yet stunningly, or maybe it's just glorified Pokémon cards.

An Aitchison centered display, showcasing every single part of our school that makes it special,the grand buildings, expansive grounds and elegant horses.



In one of the connecting rooms stood tall a collection of mannequins, all embellished with glossamer clothing, highlighting how: art knows no bounds, it is endless. It comes in many forms, shapes and sizes, its not limited to just the traditional paint on canvas everyone is used to, artistry isn't linear and neither are the representations made.

Another key aspect of art: photography; the eternal capture of a moment of time taken in an aesthetically pleasing way, representing how nothing is stagnant, everything shifts and taking pictures makes the changes even more apparent.



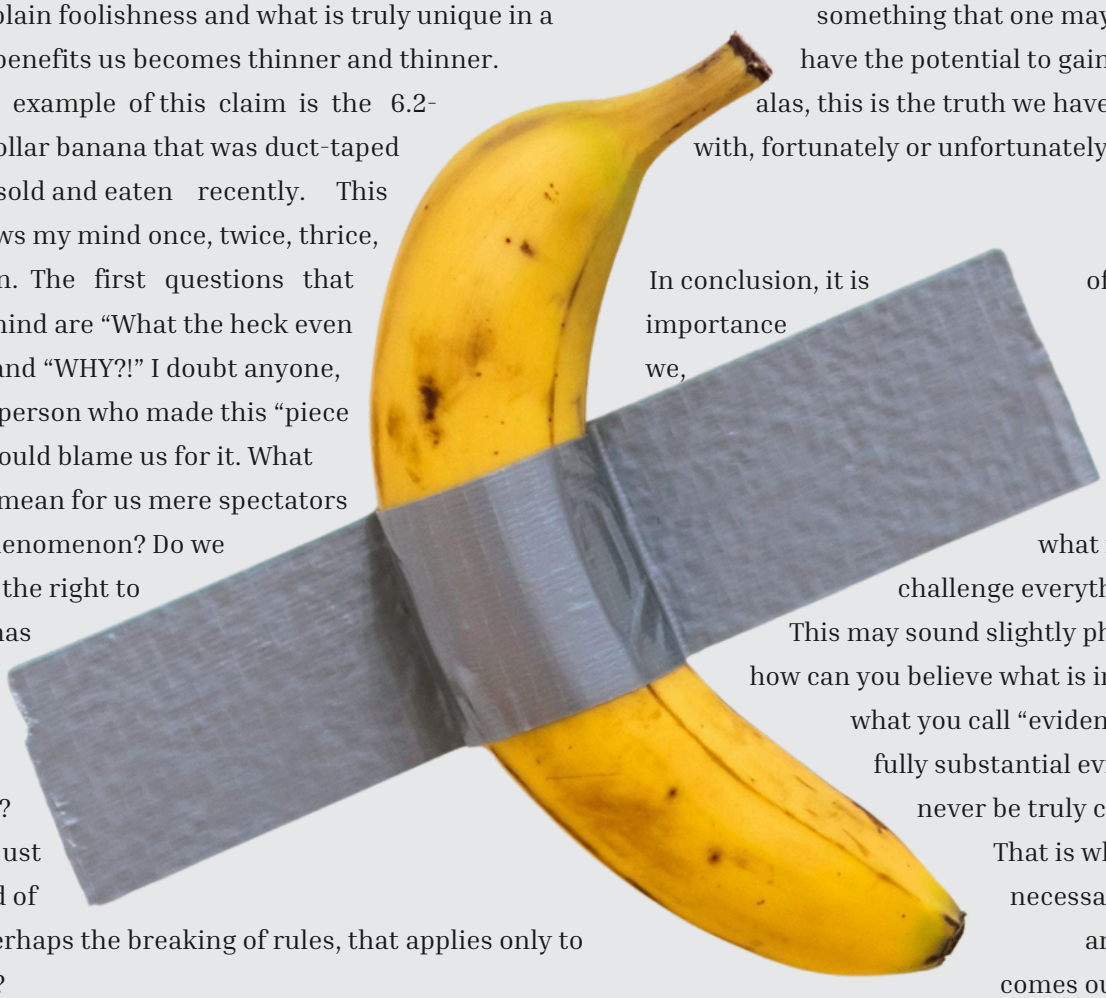
I fear im not artsy enough to understand this one, like idk is that teeth with bleeding flowers on the wall, im gonna leave this one for the real artists have fun guys.

Duct-Taped Banana: Revolutionary or Stupid?

By: M. Saraan Bin Waqas

As the world progresses to a more refined, glamorized place in the cosmos with skyscrapers everywhere you look, breakthroughs in fashion and popular culture, accessibility at its peak, and much more, the line between plain foolishness and what is truly unique in a way that benefits us becomes thinner and thinner.

A prime example of this claim is the 6.2-million-dollar banana that was duct-taped to a wall, sold and eaten recently. This news blows my mind once, twice, thrice, and again. The first questions that come to mind are "What the heck even is this?!" and "WHY?!" I doubt anyone, even the person who made this "piece of art," would blame us for it. What does this mean for us mere spectators to this phenomenon? Do we now have the right to sell bananas for millions of dollars to people? Or is this just some kind of rule, or perhaps the breaking of rules, that applies only to the elites?



Besides that, what message did this banana and duct tape represent that was so profound as to be auctioned and sold for millions? And, more importantly, what was the reason that message, if any, became so tiny and insignificant that the medium, the banana, was eaten like many others of its kind? We might sound like psychopaths for. addressing such. questions. about something that one may think shouldn't have the potential to gain such value, but alas, this is the truth we have to face and live with, fortunately or unfortunately, whatever label you choose.

In conclusion, it is of utmost importance that we, as rational and intelligent beings, are aware of what is around us and challenge everything. Everything. This may sound slightly philosophical, but how can you believe what is in front of you? Is what you call "evidence" even actual, fully substantial evidence? You can never be truly certain, can you? That is why it has become necessary to rationalize any new idea that comes our way. As Edgar Allan Poe once said, "Believe only half of what you see and nothing that you hear." And, of course, it. is entirely up to you as an individual, someone who is experiencing it all, to decide whether this movement of sorts is radically spectacular or just as mad as a hatter.

Sources:

- smithsonianmag.com — That Viral Banana Duct-Taped to a Wall?
- tribune.com.pk - Duct-Taped Banana Sells for $6.2m

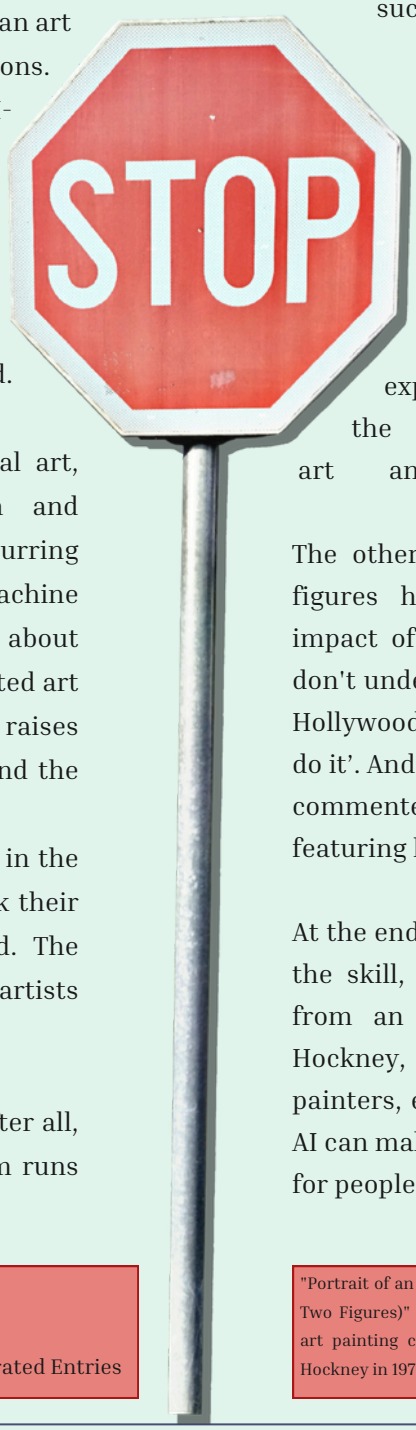
ART?

I think not -

The End Of Originality

By: Aalyan Iqbal

The Pokémon company disqualified semi-finalists who used Artificial Intelligence in an art contest meant to showcase personal creations. From a lineup of 300 qualifiers, 6 were AI-generated. AI has definitely become relevant in creative fields, but while serious concerns are raised when the work of Artists is copied without consent, it raises questions on the ethical and moral implications involved.



AI is increasingly used to generate visual art, music, literature and poetry, design and architecture, and the list goes on. AI is blurring the lines between human and machine creativity, fuelling ongoing discussions about copyright ownership. Moreover, AI-generated art not only challenges traditional art but also raises questions about originality, authorship, and the role of artists in the creative process.
AI has been causing a significant shakeup in the creative industry, urging artists to rethink their careers and roles in the evolving world. The looming threat of AI to displace human artists should be taken seriously.

It is not simply that AI lacks originality; after all, so too does most human art. The problem runs far deeper. Art loses its essence in the process of machine invention. Lack of sentiments and loss of connectedness have profound consequences not just for artists but viewers.

Christie's, a prominent auction house, recently had its first auction dedicated to AI-generated Art, titled 'Augmented Intelligence'. Over 30 pieces of AI-generated paintings, sculptures, and digital works were exhibited. The auction generated considerable debate and criticism. Despite the controversy, the auction was largely successful, with many lots exceeding their estimated values.

"The Future of AI is not about replacing humans, it's about augmenting human. capabilities," said the CEO of Google. Artists can positively use AI to explore new forms and ideas, pushing the boundaries of what is possible in art and achieving superior. outcomes.

The other side of the coin is that prominent figures have expressed concerns about the impact of AI on music. As Ed Sheeran said, "I don't understand about AI. For the last 60 years, Hollywood movies have been telling you 'Don't do it'. And now everyone's doing it. Selena Gomez commented on an AI-generated version of a song featuring her voice as "Scary".

At the end of the day, AI is not a replacement for the skill, intuition, and originality that comes from an artist's heart and mind. As David Hockney, one of the most influential living painters, expressed, "I don't think computers or AI can make art. Art is made of people, by people, for people."

"Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)" is a famous pop art painting created by David Hockney in 1972

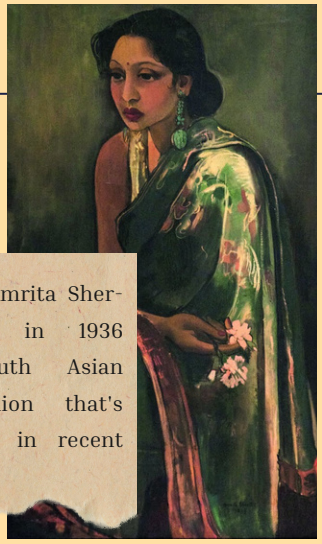
Sources:
- puck.news- Putting the Art in Artificial
- hypebeast.com - Pokémon Disqualifies AI-Generated Entries

Revival of Vintage Fashion and Media: Nostalgia Reimagined

By: M. Rafay Ali

Sources:

- fibre2fashion.com - The Revival of Vintage Fashion
- intercultural.com - Vintage Revival: Exploring nostalgia
- medium.com - The Retro Resurgence
- techwyse.com - Retro Design Comeback



"Sumair' by Amrita Sher-Gil painted in 1936 showing South Asian vintage fashion that's been revived in recent times

In an age dominated by fast trends and digital saturation, the revival of vintage fashion and media reflects a collective desire to reconnect with the past. What was once considered outdated has now become a symbol of authenticity, craftsmanship, and cultural depth. From flared trousers and vinyl records to analogue photography and old cinema posters, vintage aesthetics are no longer relics, they are statements.

One of the key reasons behind this resurgence is nostalgia. Younger generations, particularly Gen Z, romanticise eras they never lived through, discovering them via films, archives, and social media. Vintage fashion offers individuality in contrast to mass-produced clothing, while old media such as film cameras or cassette tapes provides a tactile, slower experience in a hyper-digital world.

Fashion: Old Silhouettes, New Meanings

High-waisted jeans, corsets, oversized blazers, and 70s-inspired prints have re-entered mainstream fashion, often reworked with modern tailoring. Thrift culture and upcycling have turned vintage shopping into a sustainable and ethical practice, making old garments socially relevant again. Wearing vintage is not just about style; it is about storytelling and resistance to disposability.

Media Revival: The Aesthetic of Imperfection

Vintage media thrives on imperfection: grainy film, faded colours, and handwritten typography. Old film posters, classic magazine layouts, and analogue photography are widely referenced in modern branding and art direction. Even social media filters mimic VHS glitches and Polaroid tones, showing how vintage aesthetics shape contemporary visual language.

Cultural Impact

The revival is not imitation but reinterpretation. Vintage aesthetics are blended with modern values, creating a hybrid culture that respects the past while questioning the future. In both fashion and media, vintage represents timelessness in a fast-moving world.

The return to vintage fashion and media is a reminder that progress does not always mean abandoning the past. Instead, it shows how history can be reshaped to create something meaningful, expressive, and enduring.

The Aesthetics of Pakistani Galleries

By: Sirmed Mehmood

Walk into a modern art gallery in Pakistan and you're greeted by a visual dialogue between history and innovation. Pakistani art spaces; the private institutions in Lahore and Karachi to the national galleries of Islamabad reflect a unique aesthetic that blends cultural heritage, contemporary sensibilities, and community engagement.

Light, Space, and Minimalist Framing

Most contemporary galleries in major cities like Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad favor clean, minimalist interiors: white walls, high ceilings, and strategic lighting that lets each painting or sculpture breathe. This approach allows vibrant works to stand out without distraction, celebrating colour, form, and texture in equal measure. This visual restraint also connects with the broader global gallery aesthetic while adapting to local cultural rhythms.

Narratives of Tradition & Modernity

Pakistani galleries frequently showcase work that references South Asian history, calligraphic traditions, landscape motifs, and everyday life, while also pushing into contemporary mediums and global dialogues. Spaces like ArtScene Gallery have been pivotal in bringing both established and emerging voices to the fore, balancing classic canvas painting with sculpture and conceptual installations.

Diverse Genres Under One Roof

Across Pakistan, from ArtSoch Contemporary in Lahore to Gallery 6 in Islamabad, exhibitions span abstract, figurative, miniature, calligraphic, and mixed-media art; reflecting the plurality of artistic expression in the country. These galleries become vibrant cultural hubs, not just exhibition rooms, inviting viewers into layered stories embedded in each brushstroke and sculptural form.

Spaces that Invite Participation

Beyond curated shows, many galleries host talks, workshops, and collaborative exhibitions. Student shows at the Zahoor ul Akhlaq Gallery at NCA, for example, provide a platform for young artists and allow the community to witness the evolving aesthetics of Pakistani art first-hand.

Together, these elements reveal that contemporary art galleries in Pakistan function as far more than display rooms. They are dynamic cultural spaces where aesthetic minimalism, historical memory, and experimental practice intersect.. Ultimately, Pakistani galleries embody a living conversation between tradition and modernity, offering spaces where art not only reflects society but actively participates in shaping its cultural future.

Sources:

- Trips to White Wall Art Gallery, Ejaz Gallery, and others
- artscenegallery.com
- artsoch.com
- Instagram - Pakistan Art Forum
- artifacts.net - Pakistan galleries

WHO DECIDES WHAT ART CAN SAY?

By: Ali Arif Piracha

For decades, art has been one universal language through which ideas and sentiments are expressed. However, it has continually turned into an intersection of controversy and clamping down. The topic that sparks the most arguments for most modern artists, though, is censorship, which is the societal cutting off point between artistic freedom and that which is socially unacceptable, offensive, or dangerous.

Artists both today and in the past, have never shied away from challenging the established norms. Discussing pieces like Gustave Courbet's sensationalism in L'Origine du Monde or Andres Serrano's Piss Christ sparks endless debates around whether art has limits. Today, the controversies are amplified. Any artistic work now has an outrageous amount of instant access and can be critiqued and judged globally within a short period.

Censorship in art, artists claim, must not exist. It is said to be the duty of an artist to provoke thought, even if it is in the most discomforting manner. Citing Ai Weiwei, they explain that such an artist is a contemporary champion because he uses his works to expose the lies of the Chinese government, and he, along with many other truth-seeking activists, defends the rights of the oppressed. Most, if not all of them, maintain that censoring art ignores the voices that need to be amplified, especially. those representing minority life or political dissent.

But some people think otherwise. Others think there should be boundaries. In most instances, art containing nudity, religious defamation, or political themes is withdrawn from galleries or banned altogether. Some are concerned that some pieces have the potential to spread hate, glorify violence, or offend sacred beliefs. For instance, Dana Schutz's Emmett Till painting at the 2017 Whitney Biennial caused huge controversy. Some critics raised doubts about whether a white artist was entitled to depict the pain of Black Americans in such a sensitive subject. Was this freedom of expression, or was it cultural appropriation?

What adds to the complexity of this problem is that "offensive" is in the eye of the beholder. What one culture honors, another may consider very insulting. So who gets to say what art goes too far? Governments? Museums? Social media sites?

As an art student myself, I sometimes ask: how do we respect at the same time that we allow for creativity? Art must challenge and make us feel, even if that feeling is painful. But I also get why people get offended by some images or concepts. Perhaps the true solution isn't to censor contentious art, but to discuss it more freely. Rather than shutting it down, we can take those opportunities to have hard but necessary conversations.

Ultimately, the discussion of censorship in art isn't disappearing anytime soon. As the world gets more progressive, so will our parameters of what's deemed acceptable. But one thing is for sure, and that is that art will continue to show us our struggles, our values, and our voices, even if they are in conflict.

Sources
debatingmatters.com — Art Censorship
theguardian.com — Ai Weiwei: The Artwork that Made Me the Most Dangerous Person in China

BANKSY

Who is He?

By: M. Saraan Bin Waqas

One of the most fascinating mysteries of the late 20th and early 21st centuries is the identity of Banksy, a street artist who speaks out for political and social change through his art. Originating in England, his artistic identity is pseudonymous, and his real identity remains unconfirmed.

However, his name has been speculated to be Robbie, according to various media sources, though this remains unverified, and what we do know of him is that he is not only a political activist and street artist, but also a film director, making every wall he chooses subject to rebellious graffiti combined with his unique sense of dark humour. His pieces include Girl with Balloon, a piece whose different versions were used as a retaliation against the West Bank barrier and the Syrian refugee crisis.

Banksy mural at London's Royal Courts of Justice showing a judge beating a protester with a gavel, commenting on the crackdown on Palestine Action. It was quickly removed.

Even though he is so well known in the art world that his pieces are sold at auctions for hundreds of thousands, even millions, of dollars, he signs and sells prints, and his shredded version "Love Is in the Bin" of a framed copy of Girl with Balloon is described by Sotheby's as "the first work in history ever created during a live auction," his identity still remains unconfirmed as yet.

With this thorough background established, let's look into potential identities Banksy could fit into and why. As mentioned at the beginning of the article, his name is Robbie Banks, which opens a wide world of possibilities. One theory suggests Banksy may be Robert del Naja, a founding member of the band called Massive Attack, due to the striking similarity in their names: "Robert" and "Robbie." Could this be him? The legendary street artist who has everyone's brain in knots? Or perhaps he is an entirely different person under the name "Robbie Banks" according to multiple sources on the web? We will never know for sure. After all, in this age of accelerated digitization of quite literally everything around us, for example, grocery, food, and so much more delivered right to your doorstep through just that little box in the palm of your hand, it has become hard to distinguish the truth from lies.

In conclusion, whoever Banksy, or Robbie Banks, is, he has certainly left a significant impact on the ever-changing world around us which is endlessly falling into an abyss of mass destruction, an immense impact that has pushed us to question all the happenings around us and how logical they are, one that is to be remembered for generations to come.

Sources

- bbc.com - Who is Banksy?
- reuters.com - In Search Of Banksy

The Renaissance of Lahore´s 17th-Century Picture Wall

By: Aalyan Iqbal

A conservation project was launched on February 15 in Androon Lahore (Walled City), a historic 2.6 sq. km area with 12 gates, religious sites, and bustling streets. The project is a joint effort by the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) and the Aga Khan Cultural Service-Pakistan (AKCS-P), aiming to restore seven key sites in the Lahore Fort, including the Picture Wall, Sheesh Mahal, and Zanana Mosque.

The Picture Wall, the exterior wall of the Lahore Fort, begun by Jahangir in 1624–25 and completed by Shah Jahan in 1631–32, is a standout feature. It is 240 feet long, 50 feet high, and made up of 635 recessed, decorated panels over three levels. It is partially responsible for the Lahore Fort's UNESCO listing as a historic site in 1981. Its restoration, started in 2018, is expected to fully finish this year.

Current conservation work employs a series of artisans specialised in traditional construction methods and introduces modern conservation practice to Pakistani conservators through training and capacity building by international experts.

"In Pakistan, conservation projects usually overlook the vital role of science in heritage preservation," states Zeina Naseer, an AKCS-P Conservation Scientist. "The conservation of the picture wall, however, has heavily relied on utilizing innovations and technologies in conservation science. Good conservation practice demands a harmonious union of science and artistry. It compels us to recognize that the master artisans of the past, like those who created the picture wall, were not only artists, but also scientists, engineers, and architects. Today, the duty of the conservator is not just to preserve their legacy but also to revive that lost wisdom."

Working in tandem with artisans in the city, Tausif Khawaja, the CEO of the Aga Khan Cultural Services in the country, mentioned that the picture wall project couldn't have been executed without the inclusion of skilled craftspeople from local communities.

"Employing artisans gives them an opportunity to receive training which enables skill transfer to future generations. This helps to add to the skillset of both skilled and semi-skilled individuals, allowing them to become more economically mobile."

With the help of skilled labour and detailed scientific and historical knowledge the picture wall is being fully restored in the year of 2025-26, garnering more tourists and showcasing the Pakistani culture's immense talent, present and past.

Sources:

- Trip To Lahore Fort
- Forbes.com - Lahore's 400-Year-Ole 'Picture Wall' To Be Fully Restored This Year

The Pakistani Tradition of Sculpting: Pots, Plates, and Everyday Ceramics

By: M. Abdullah Sheraz

Long before industrial production and modern design, pottery in Pakistan was both an art and a necessity. From sculpted clay pots to hand-shaped plates and bowls, ceramic traditions across the region reflect centuries of craftsmanship, community, and cultural memory. Even today, these humble objects carry stories of land, labour, and lived experience.

Roots in Ancient Civilisations

Pakistan's ceramic heritage can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilisation, where terracotta vessels were used for storage, cooking, and ritual purposes. These early forms prioritised function, yet their symmetry, surface patterns, and earthy textures reveal a deep aesthetic sensibility. This balance between utility and beauty remains central to Pakistani pottery.

Regional Styles and Techniques

Different regions developed distinct ceramic identities. In Multan, blue pottery influenced by Persian and Islamic art is known for its intricate floral and geometric motifs. Sindh's earthenware often features warm reds and browns, shaped for daily use such as water storage and cooking. In Punjab, hand-thrown clay pots, plates, and diyas are traditionally made on wheels, their simplicity highlighting the maker's skill rather than ornamentation.

Cultural and Social Significance

Pottery is deeply woven into Pakistani rituals and domestic spaces. Clay plates and pots are used in weddings, religious ceremonies, and seasonal festivals. The act of shaping clay: slow, physical, and repetitive stands in contrast to mass production, symbolising patience, continuity, and respect for craft.

Preservation in a Modern World

Today, Pakistani ceramic traditions face challenges from industrial alternatives, yet artisan communities and cultural institutions are working to preserve these skills. Workshops, exhibitions, and design collaborations ensure that pottery remains relevant, bridging tradition with contemporary aesthetics.

The tradition of sculpting pots and plates in Pakistan is more than craft; it is a living dialogue between past and present. Each handmade piece carries the touch of its maker: imperfect, grounded, and enduring, reminding us that art often begins in everyday life

Sources:

- thefridaytimes.com - Preserving Multani Ceramics and Handicrafts
- brecorder.com - Pakistan's Ceramics Industry
- arabnews.pk - Pakistan's Northwest Pottery

The Resurgence of Pakistani Live Music

By: Waleed Ahmed Yousaf

After years of digital dominance and pandemic silence, live music in Pakistan is experiencing a powerful revival. From packed auditoriums to open-air festivals, audiences are once again gathering to experience music not through screens, but through shared sound and space. This resurgence marks more than entertainment, it signals a renewed cultural confidence.

Alhamra: The Cultural Heartbeat

At the centre of this revival stands Alhamra Arts Council, Lahore, a historic institution that has long shaped Pakistan's artistic identity. Its halls have become vibrant again, hosting classical mehfils, contemporary concerts, poetry-and-music collaborations, and fusion performances. Alhamra provides a rare bridge between generations where young indie musicians perform in the same space that once echoed with ghazals and classical ragas.

Diverse Sounds, One Stage

What defines today's live music scene is diversity. Classical music, qawwali, jazz, rock, folk, and experimental fusion now coexist across venues. Events such as jazz nights, sufi music evenings, university concerts, and cultural festivals reflect how Pakistani music refuses to be confined to a single genre. Artists blend traditional instruments like the tabla and sitar

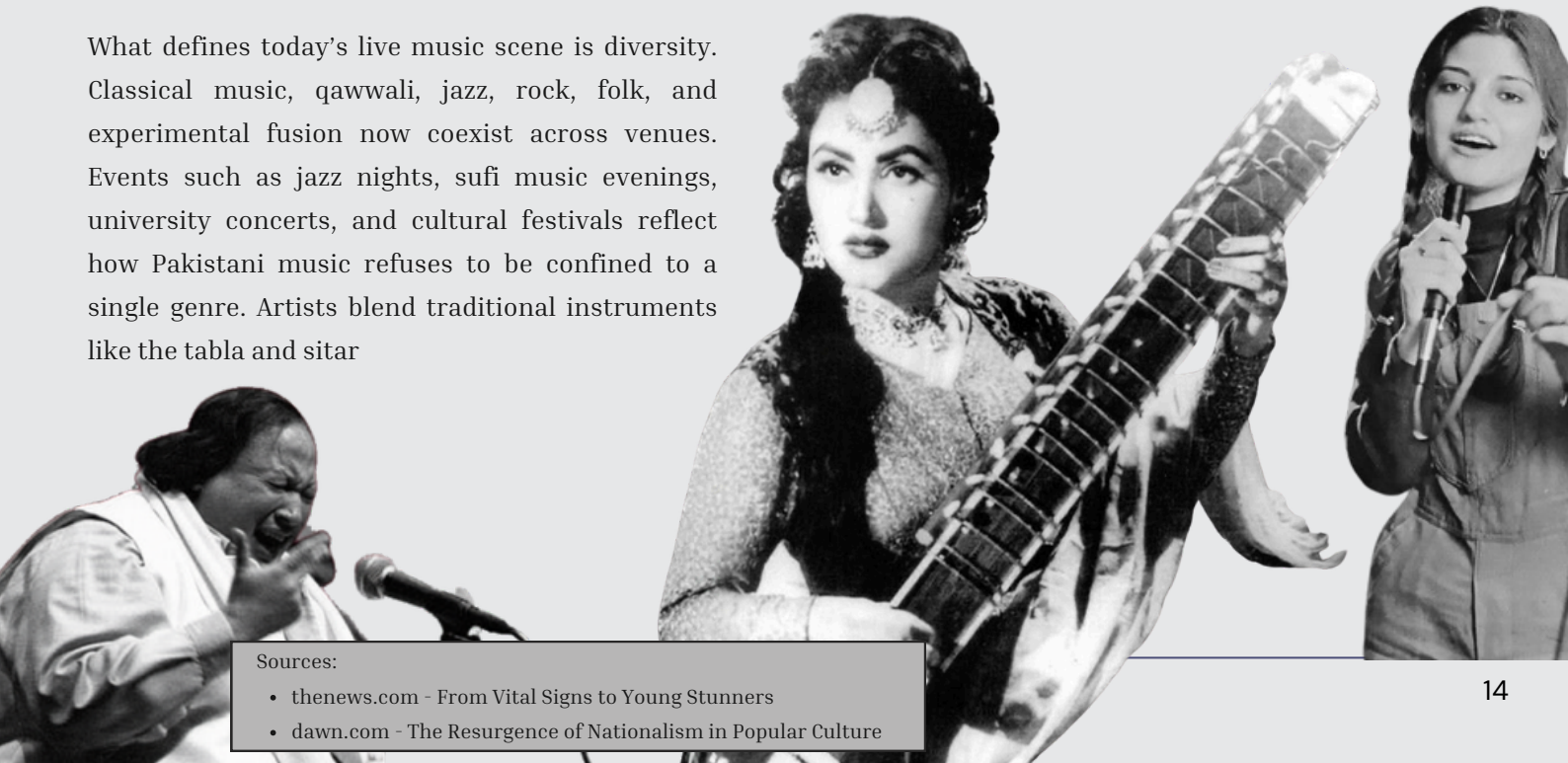
Festivals and Independent Spaces

Beyond Alhamra, music festivals and pop-up concerts in Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad have played a crucial role. Events like open-mic nights, rooftop concerts, and seasonal music festivals have revived audience engagement, particularly among youth. These spaces prioritise intimacy and authenticity, reminding listeners of the emotional power of live performance.

Why Live Music Matters Now

In an era shaped by algorithms and streaming platforms, live music offers something irreplaceable: human connection. The imperfections of live sound, the energy of the crowd, and the immediacy of performance create moments that cannot be replayed or scrolled past.

The resurgence of Pakistani live music represents a cultural reawakening. With institutions like Alhamra and a growing network of events and venues, live music is reclaiming its place not just as performance, but as collective experience, memory, and identity.



Sources:

- thenews.com - From Vital Signs to Young Stunners
- dawn.com - The Resurgence of Nationalism in Popular Culture

Desi Musical Instruments: The Heartbeat of Pakistani Music

By: Dhani Bux

Music in Pakistan is not just sound — it is history, culture, and emotion shaped into rhythm and melody. Central to this are Desi musical instruments, which carry centuries of tradition and continue to define the country's rich musical identity. From folk tunes to classical ragas, these instruments provide both texture and soul to performances.

String Instruments

- **Sitar**: Though often associated with Indian classical music, the sitar has been widely used in Pakistani classical and fusion music. Its long neck and sympathetic strings produce a resonant, meditative sound.
- Sarangi: Known for its ability to mimic the human voice, the sarangi is a staple in classical and folk performances, especially in Punjab and Sindh.
- **Rabab**: A short-necked lute, historically tied to Pashtun culture, it is often played in traditional folk music and storytelling.

Percussion Instruments

- **Tabla**: The quintessential South Asian drum, the tabla sets the rhythm in classical, semi-classical, and contemporary compositions. Its intricate beats are central to both solo and ensemble performances.
- **Dhol**: Popular in Punjabi folk music, especially during festivals and weddings, the dhol is a double-sided drum played with sticks. Its vibrant beats energize crowds and dance rituals.
- **Bongo, Dholak, and Daf**: Smaller percussion instruments used in folk music, Sufi qawwali, and regional celebrations.

Wind Instruments

- **Bansuri**: A bamboo flute that produces hauntingly beautiful melodies, common in classical, Sufi, and film music.
- **Shehnai**: Often used in weddings and ceremonies, this reed instrument has a sharp, festive tone.

Cultural Significance

Desi instruments are not just musical tools; they are bearers of cultural identity. Each instrument carries regional signatures — the rhythmic dhol of Punjab, the soulful rabab of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the melodic bansuri of Sindh — connecting music to geography, history, and tradition. They are also integral to Sufi music, storytelling, and seasonal celebrations.

Modern Revival

In contemporary Pakistan, many young musicians are blending these traditional instruments with electronic music and global genres. From fusion bands to live qawwali performances at Alhamra or music festivals, Desi instruments are reaching new audiences, preserving heritage while innovating creatively.

Desi musical instruments are the pulse of Pakistan's musical landscape, bridging past and present, folk and classical, local and global. Each beat, string, and note tells a story - a story of culture, creativity, and community.

Sources:

- Trip to Lahore Taxali market
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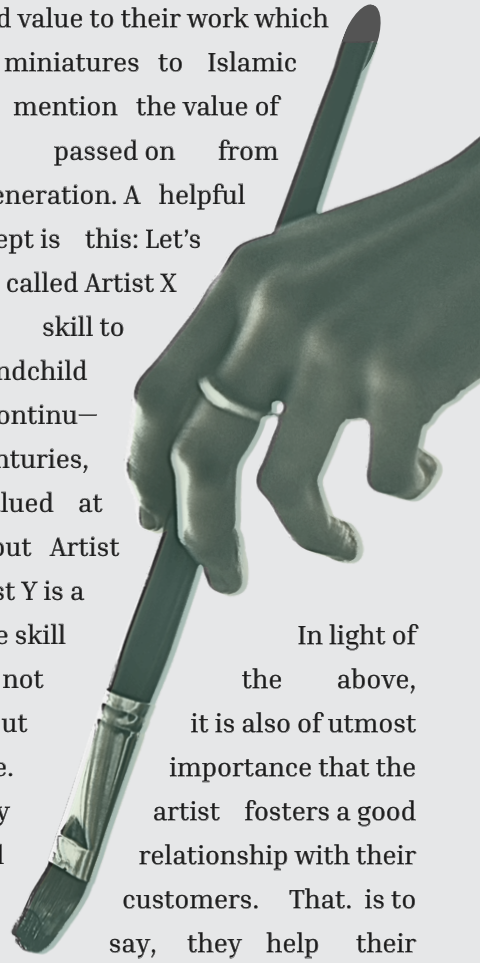
how Artists Price Their work

By: Ali Nawaz

Artists make use of a mix of strategies, shaped by culture, economic conditions, and artistic value, to arrive at prices that take labor, heritage, and concept into account. For example, several emerging painters in Lahore and Karachi start their process by calculating the direct costs of canvas, paint, frames, and other essential equipment. Given the current rise in inflation, the cost of materials has risen sharply, squeezing artists' margins.

In other cases, artists charge based on the amount of hours they spent on a specific piece. As an example, artists in Pakistan may charge 1000 rupees per hour if they recently became part of the market, while more established names in art would charge 3000 rupees per hour. Furthermore, at the National College of Art, teachers tend to allow full freedom to their students in pricing their work at university exhibitions, while recommending keeping those prices reasonable to maintain long-term demand.

In Pakistan and India, artists ensure that they keep that aspect of their artwork in mind, adding culture-based value to their work which ranges from Mughal miniatures to Islamic calligraphy, not to mention the value of heritage and skill passed on from generation to generation. A helpful analogy of this concept is this: Let's say there is an artist called Artist X and he passes his skill to his children and grandchild-ren, and the cycle continu-s. After multiple centuries, Artist X's work is valued at millions of dollars, but Artist X's descendant, Artist Y is a budding artist whose skill isn't valued because not many care about heritage-based value. Looking at it this way would make it sound absurd but it is the near-truth for so many artists out there.



In light of the above, it is also of utmost importance that the artist fosters a good relationship with their customers. That is to say, they help their customers to understand why their work is valued the way it is. As mentioned earlier, to maintain long-term demand, you must not just price your work wisely, but also find a target audience that values your work just as much as you do.

Sources:

- kasimkasuri.com – The Beginner's Guide to Buying Contemporary Pakistani Art
- artbusinessinfo.com– How Artists Price Their Art

Synesthesia in Practice: Seeing Sound, Hearing Color

By: Rafay Ali

Imagine hearing a note from a piano and seeing a swirl of blue ripple across the air. Or tasting a strawberry and sensing a burst of crimson light. This is the world of synesthesia in art; a fascinating intersection of sensory perception, neuroscience, and creativity where one sense evokes another, and the boundaries between seeing, hearing, and feeling dissolve.

What Is Synesthesia in Art?

Synesthesia is a neurological phenomenon in which stimulation of one sensory pathway triggers experiences in another. Some people naturally perceive colors when they hear music, or associate shapes with tastes. Artists, both naturally synesthetic and inspired by the concept, have long explored this overlap, creating works that translate sound into color, music into motion, or touch into visual form.

Historical Roots

The idea isn't new. In the early 20th century, Wassily Kandinsky sought to paint music, attempting to capture the emotional and tonal qualities of sound on canvas. Later, artists like Paul Klee experimented with abstract forms and colors inspired by rhythm, pitch, and harmony. These pioneers saw art not just as static images, but as multi-sensory experiences.

Contemporary Practices

Today, synesthesia-inspired art spans multiple mediums:

Visual Music: Digital artists translate compositions into dynamic visuals, where each instrument or note generates color and motion on screen.

Performance & Installation: Immersive installations allow audiences to "see" sound waves through LED projections or vibrating floors. Some performances even pair live musicians with real-time visualizations of their music.

Interactive Technology: Apps and VR experiences translate auditory input into visuals, allowing participants to experience synesthesia regardless of neurological predisposition.

Artists like Olafur Eliasson and Refik Anadol create works that make invisible phenomena visible, such as sound patterns or environmental data, producing a fusion of perception, science, and art.

Why It Matters

Synesthetic art challenges how we perceive reality. It asks: can art expand our sensory boundaries? Can we feel a sound or hear a color? These works invite audiences into immersive, multi-layered experiences, blurring the line between observer and artwork. In a world dominated by visual culture, synesthesia reminds us that our senses are interconnected and our experiences of art can be profoundly personal and dynamic.

Sources:

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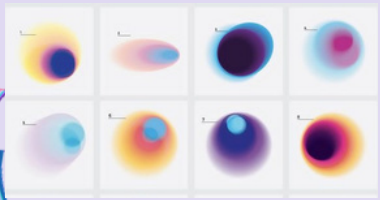

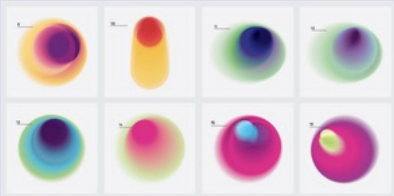

Mata e lauh o qalam chhin
gai to kya gham hai