

ON A TOUR OF CANVAS
GALLERY WITH

SAMEERA RAJA

AS SHE DIVULGES
WHAT IT TAKES TO
SHOW AT HER
PRESTIGIOUS SPACE

When did you first decide you had an interest in art?

I guess the interest in art was present from a young age, hence I decided to go to NCA for my architecture degree, where the foundation year is cross disciplinary for Fine Art/Architecture/Design. Everyone ends up learning how to draw, paint, sculpt, draft and design.

What was your motivation towards opening a gallery?

When I returned from Lahore after my graduation and started working as an architect in Karachi, I realised that while there were a couple of good galleries, the works being shown at those galleries was not what I had been exposed to during my years in college. I felt the need to show work that was contemporary, cutting edge, novel, current and representative of the times we live in.

If you had not opened the Canvas Gallery, what other profession would you be interested in pursuing?

The world is your oyster, there are so many possibilities, as long as you are dedicated, committed and passionate about what you do, you can do anything you set your mind to, be it architecture, design house, photography, writing, who knows? The possibilities are endless.

How would you describe your personal style?

My personal style in art is contemporary – something that stimulates me either intellectually, emotionally or physically. It has to grab me. I must react to it – love or hate is ok, indifference is not. My personal business style is ruled by the mantra, say it as it is – straight forward and direct. Believe in yourself and stand up for yourself. Do what is correct, with no compromise on integrity.

Who in your opinion values art?

People value art for different reasons. There is no right or wrong. Whatever reason it may be, it's personal – some for nostalgia, some have emotional reasons, some do it for financial reasons. It's difficult to brand a certain type of person. However, I would say that any person who values art is in touch with their soul.

How do artists value their work?

Artists value their work, as it is a piece of themselves – it is their baby, a part of themselves that they are sharing with others. That is the biggest gift that all creative people have. They share with others, selflessly.

How are artists selected and how do they make the transition from art school into a reputable gallery like yours?

We select an artist purely on the basis of merit. I follow an artist's progress from student days and if I feel that the work has potential, I put my money where my mouth is and give the emerging artists a show. The artist must be talented, driven, committed and passionate to be able to show at Canvas.



Sameera Raja is a trained architect from the National college of Arts, Lahore. After some years of architectural practice, she founded Canvas Gallery in Karachi, the premier Art Gallery of Pakistan dealing in modern, miniature and contemporary art





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The Canvas Gallery is a beautifully lit space, portraying the works of contemporary artists, bringing out the colours and every detail

