

# India watches out for first auction of Pakistani art

**By Our Staff Reporter**

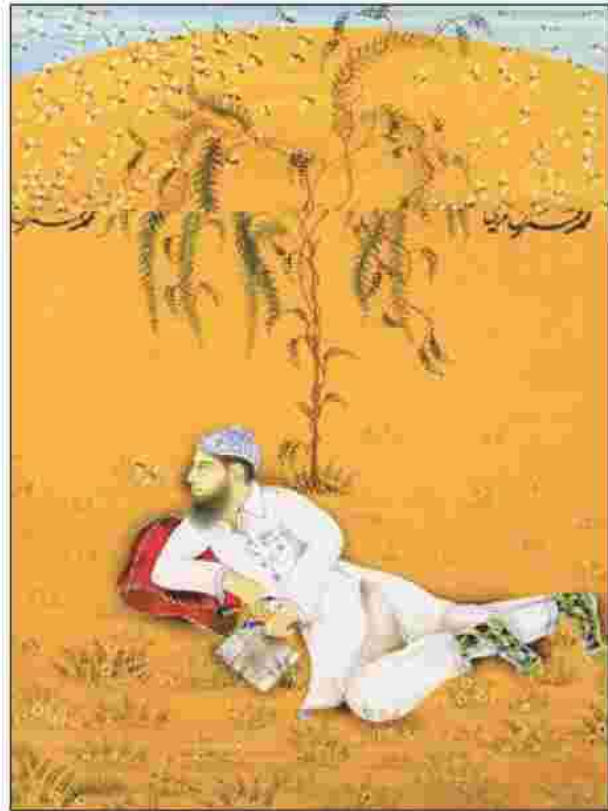
KARACHI, Nov 3: "This will be an auction to watch out for," says Sameera Raja, owner of Karachi's Canvas Gallery.

In what will be the first Indian auction of Pakistani art, 70 pieces of work by 38 modern and contemporary Pakistani artists will be offered for sale by Indian auction house Saffronart on Nov 7 and 8.

The online auction, which is expected to fetch between \$365,000 and \$480,000, will include works by contemporary artists Rashid Rana, Imran Qureshi, Mohammad Ali Talpur, Naiza Khan, Ayaz Jochio, Shazia Sikander and Nusra Latif as well as modern artists Sadequain, Anwar Jalal Shemza, Jamil Naqsh and Ahmed Parvez.

Panel discussions and previews will be held in London and New York and viewings in Mumbai and New Delhi before the sale.

While Pakistani works have been



**A PAINTING** by Imran Qureshi

sold in the past through Indian auction houses and leading international auctioneers including Sotheby's, Christie's and Bonhams — normally as part of broader sales that cover art

from Asia, South Asia or the Middle East — this will be the first Indian auction devoted exclusively to Pakistani art.

Several of the pieces were originally exhibited in Pakistan, from where they have been acquired over the last few years at much lower prices.

Ms Raja's gallery has exhibited works by many of the artists featured in the sale.

"The auction includes all the top Pakistani artists and an extensive body of Pakistani work," she says. "But more interesting than the sale itself is why it is taking place and what the ripple effects of it will be. It speaks volumes about the interest in Pakistani art. Indian art is now priced out of reach and Pakistani art is seen as more exciting and cutting-edge.

"It will also be wonderful if the auction has an impact on domestic tastes. Much of the work being offered is contemporary art, which the Pakistani market is still not interested in."



**A WORK** by Zahoorul Akhlaq

Works featured in Art of Pakistan include Imran Qureshi's 'Moderate enlightenment 2', a contemporary miniature depicting a religious scholar wearing camouflage socks that is

expected to fetch up to \$15,000; Rashid Rana's portrait of Bollywood actor Salman Khan, made up of thousands of digital images of ordinary Pakistani men and expected to go for up to \$20,000; and a Naiza Khan sculpture of women's clothing made of metal and leather that could go for up to \$8,000.

"Rashid Rana is popular in India, and to an extent Sadequain and Jamil Naqsh," explains Indian arts journalist and curator Sahar Zaman, who adds that there is a bigger appetite in India for contemporary rather than modern Pakistani art.

"So there has been interest in Pakistani art ever since the Asian art market boomed in 2006 and 2007.

"Pakistan as a country is a mystery to most Indians because they haven't had a chance to visit it. So Pakistani art is seen as something that is mysterious and exotic, and extremely powerful because it makes bold political statements about the turmoil within the country."