

# Untamed, Raw Beauty

by

Iqbal Durrani



ARTCITI GALLERY

Invites you to an exclusive exhibition  
of paintings

# Untamed, Raw Beauty

by

**Iqbal Durrani**

21st March - 24th March 2019

Exhibition Opening

21st March 2019

6pm - 8pm

Visit our gallery or view the virtual exhibition at  
[www.artciti.com](http://www.artciti.com)



Plot # 36-C, 2nd Floor, Bukhari Commercial Lane-13,  
Main Khayaban-e-Shujaat, Phase VI,  
DHA, Karachi. 021-35250495-6

# Artist's Statement

Expression of my responsiveness to complex human behavior and raw desires has always been a challenging undertaking. Though it all starts with a challenge, but soon it becomes a pleasurable journey on the road of ecstasy. Every moment the painting draws closer to its end it sends off a signal to explore yet another possible point of culmination. Ultimately I find myself completely fulfilled, replete with the goodness of earnest expression a rewarding outcome of delightful and adventurous knife work on canvas! Serious painting is an activity that engages the soul with the spiritual configuration of life. Women, birds and flowers I believe, are all elements of life that bear semblance in characteristic and beauty which is hard to ignore. Given their unmistakable inspiration, I continued to explore possibilities of arrangement of these elements on canvas. I interweave seductive intimacies within my subjects, thus, radiating a mysterious temptation and lure. A gradual absorption of my painting engages the viewer's intellect almost involuntarily and initiates a subtle stimulus that momentarily transports the viewer to another time and dimension. It is a brief but reminiscent meeting with my world of loveable characters that rather relate to the viewers own profile.

Iqbal Durrani

2019



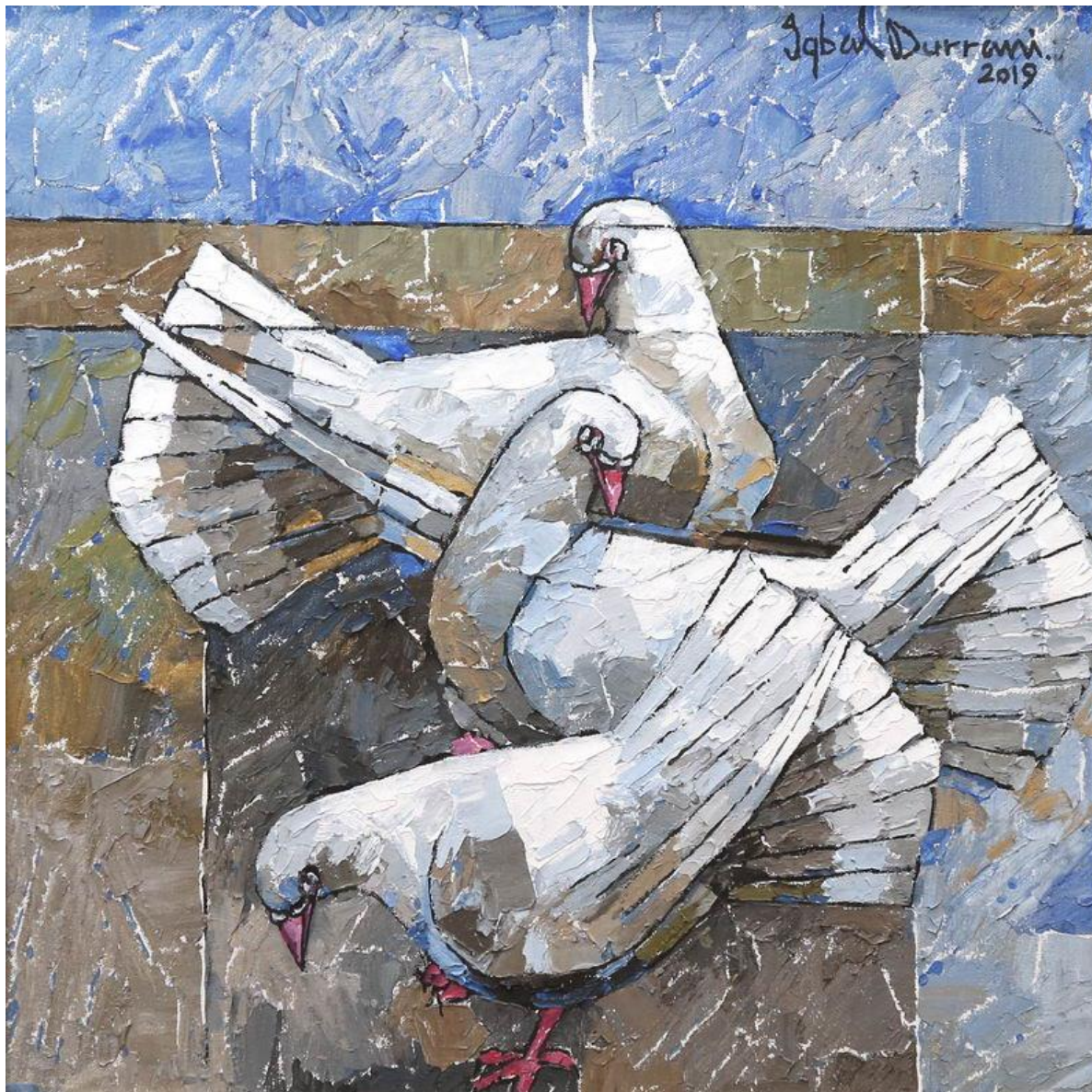
Lustful Reverie, 18 x 18 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-091, Rs. 60,000 (\$431.65)





Oblivious Siesta, 18 x 18 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-096, Rs. 60,000 (\$431.65)





Rambling Saunter, 18 x 18 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-098, Rs. 60,000 (\$431.65)





Endearment, 18 x 18 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-076, Rs. 60,000 (\$431.65)





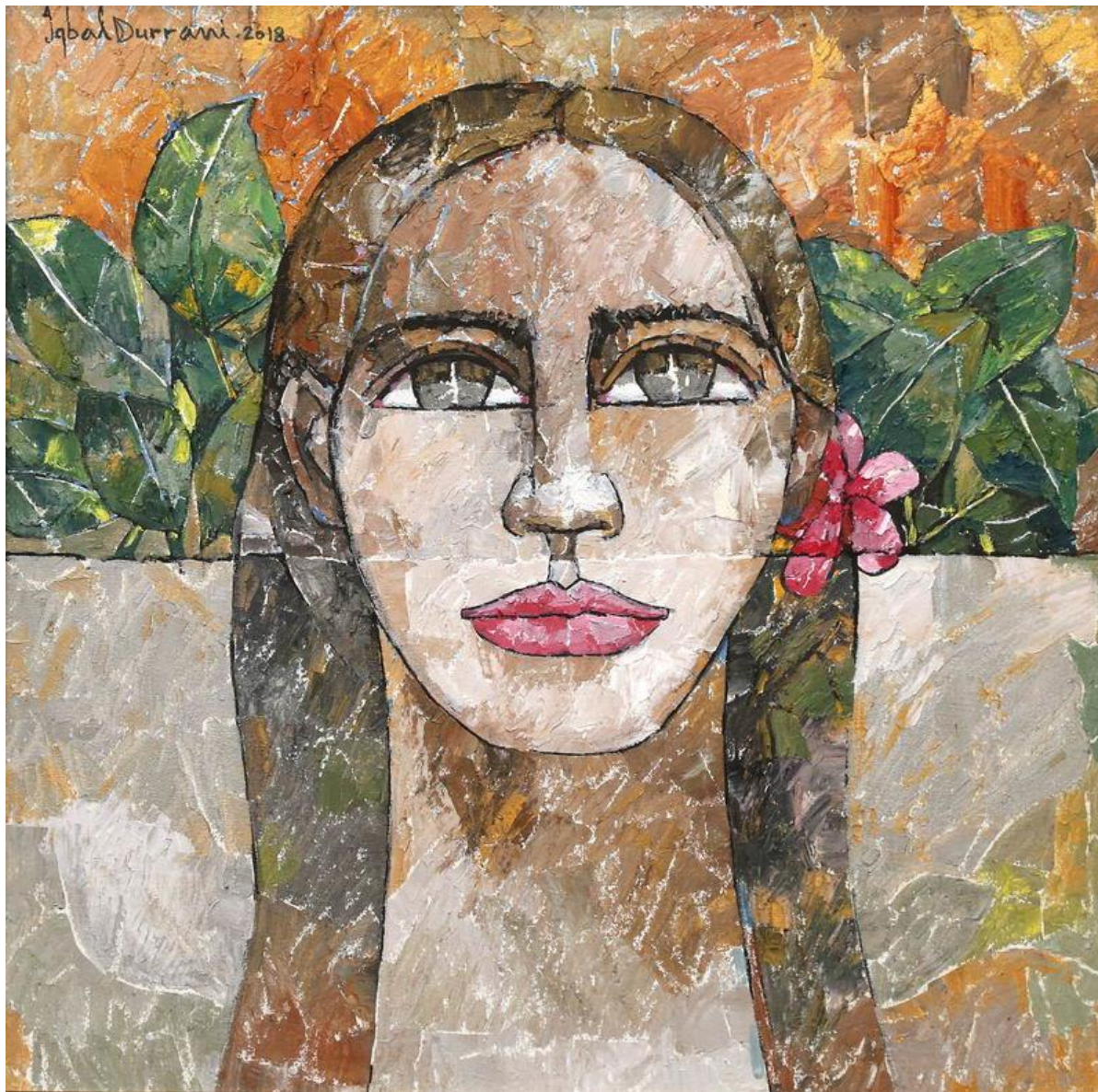
Daydreams of Love, 18 x 18 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-074, Rs. 60,000 (\$431.65)





Envious Ally, 18 x 18 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-077, Rs. 60,000 (\$431.65)





Flower Amidst Foliage, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-081, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Dreaming Birds, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-075, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





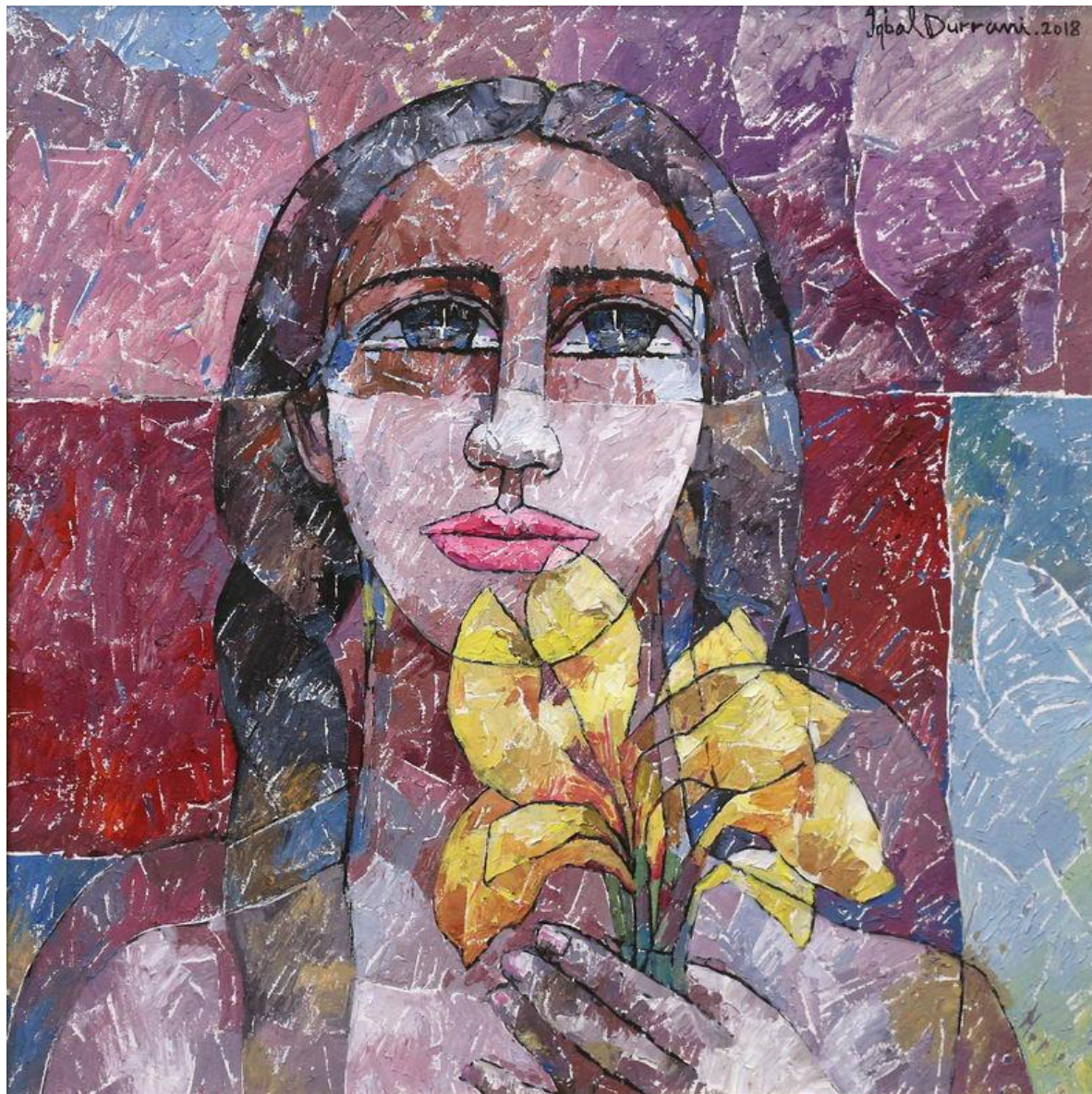
Fondling Wings, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-083, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Friendly Discourse, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-097, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





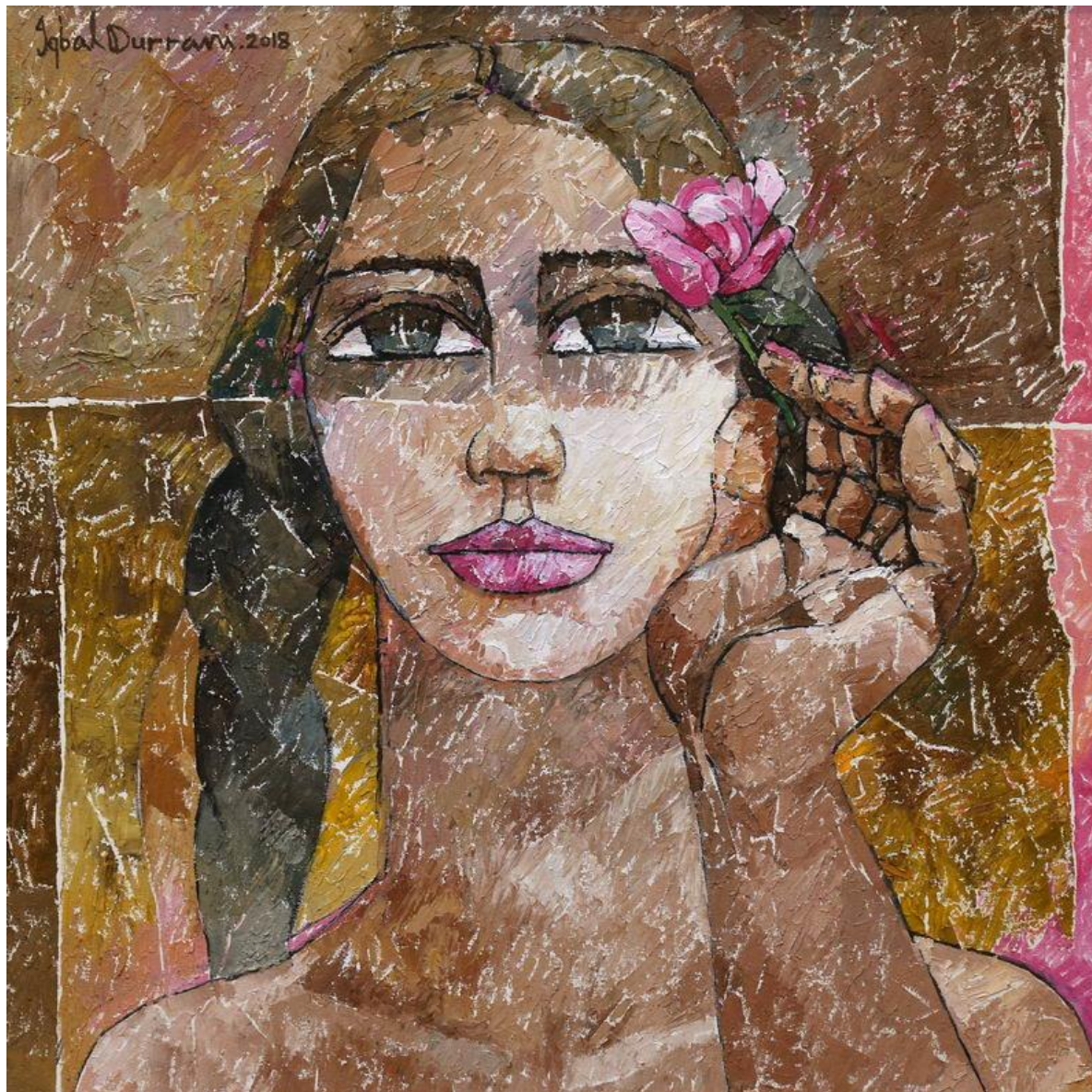
Golden Offerings, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-084, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Homecoming, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-085, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Amorous Gesture, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-068, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Cluster of Flowers, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-072, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Lively Orchids, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-088, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Living in Harmony, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-089, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





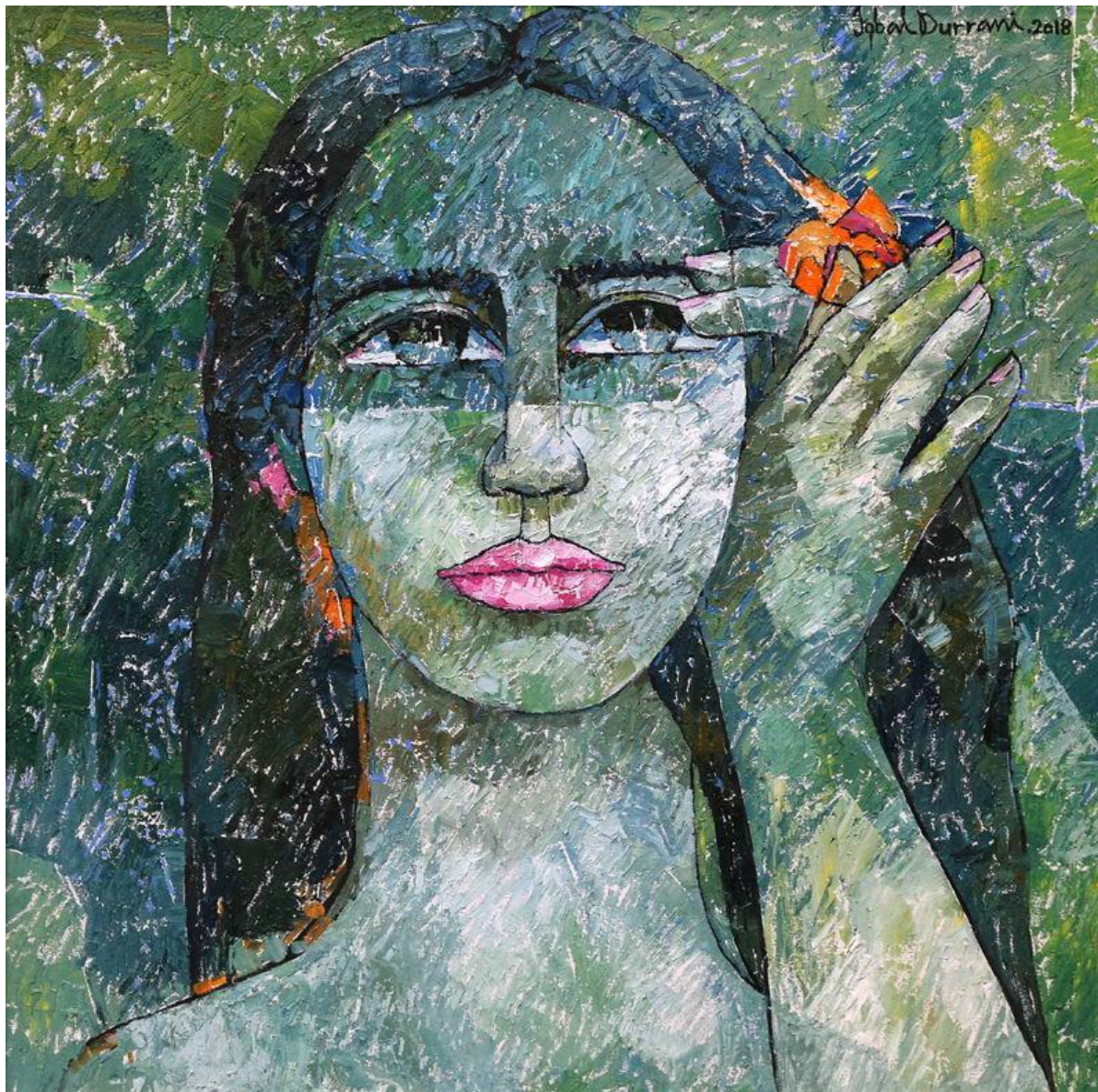
Seductive Masquerade, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-102, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Mating Dance, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-092, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Secrets of Vanity, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-101, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Mingling Lovers, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-093, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





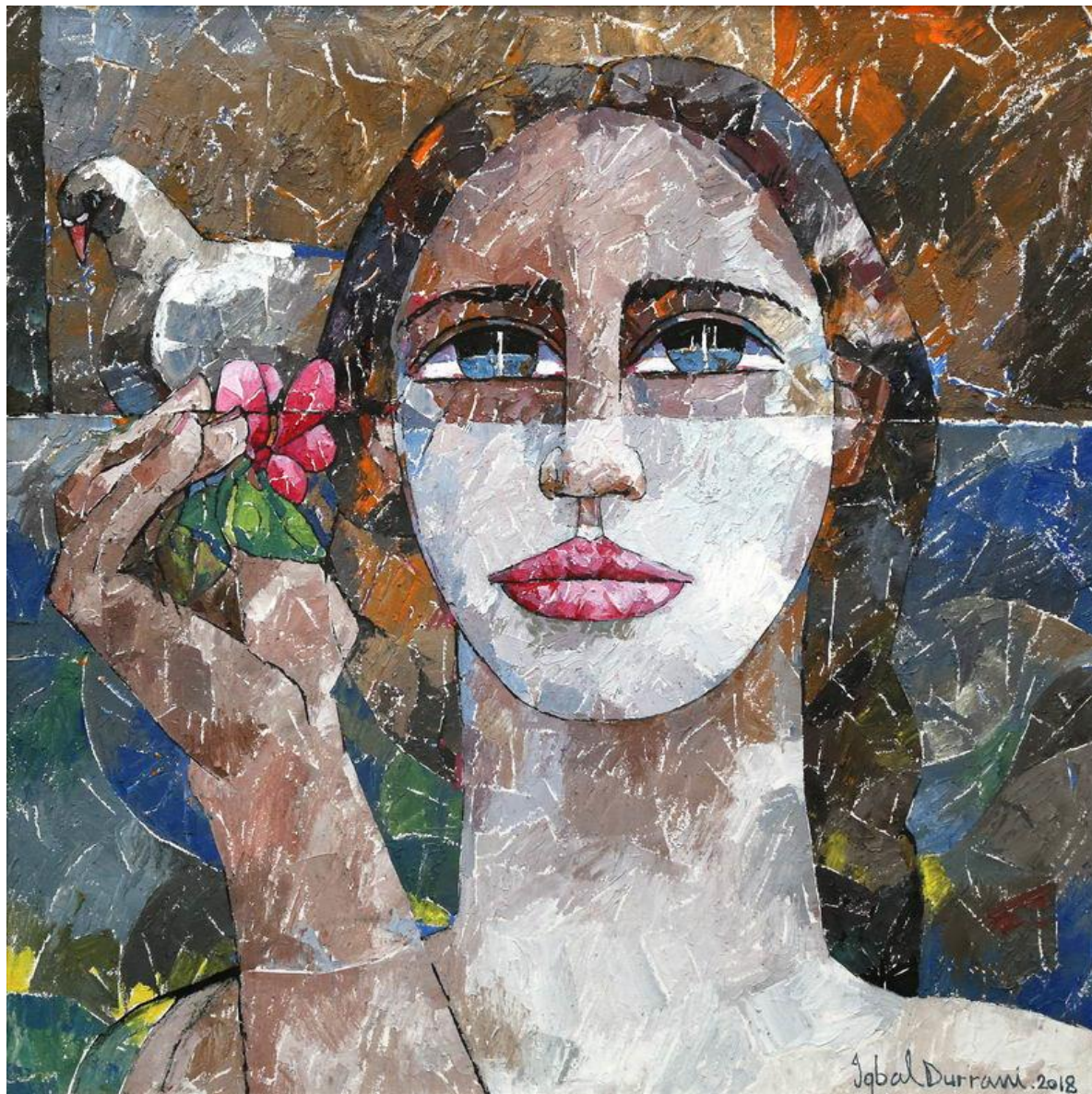
Chic Mannerism, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-071, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Neighborly Frolic, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-094, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Flower in the Locks, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-082, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Blue Fantasies, 26 x 26 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-070, Rs. 100,000 (\$719.42)





Cozy Correspondences, 18 x 48 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-073, Rs. 110,000 (\$791.37)





Joyous Togetherness, 18 x 48 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-087, Rs. 110,000 (\$791.37)





Lonesome Wanderer, 18 x 48 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-090, Rs. 110,000 (\$791.37)





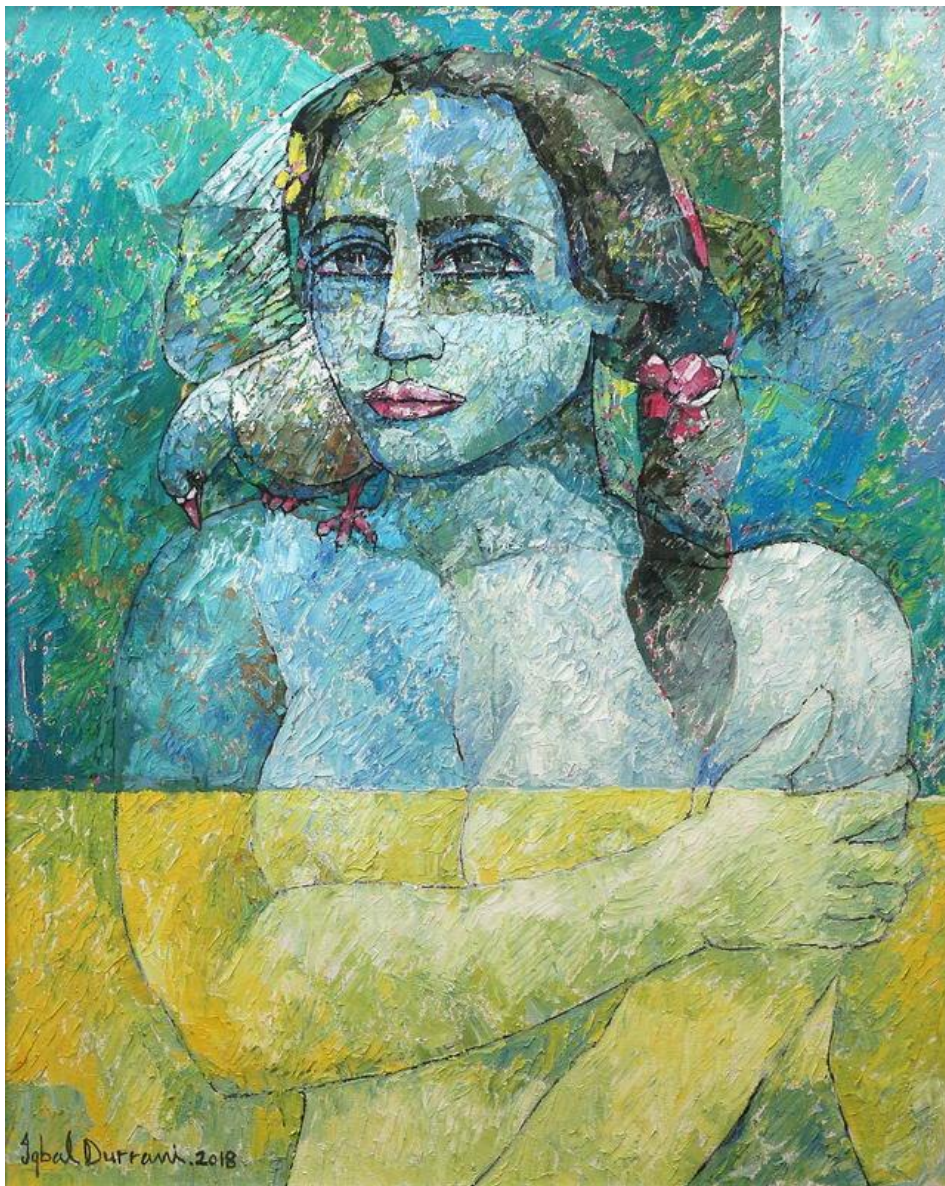
Solitary Explorer, 18 x 48 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-105, Rs. 110,000 (\$791.37)





Warm Shelters, 18 x 48 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-107, Rs. 110,000 (\$791.37)





Warm Togetherness, 24 x 30 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-108, Rs. 115,000 (\$827.34)





Winged Vanity, 24 x 30 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-109, Rs. 115,000 (\$827.34)





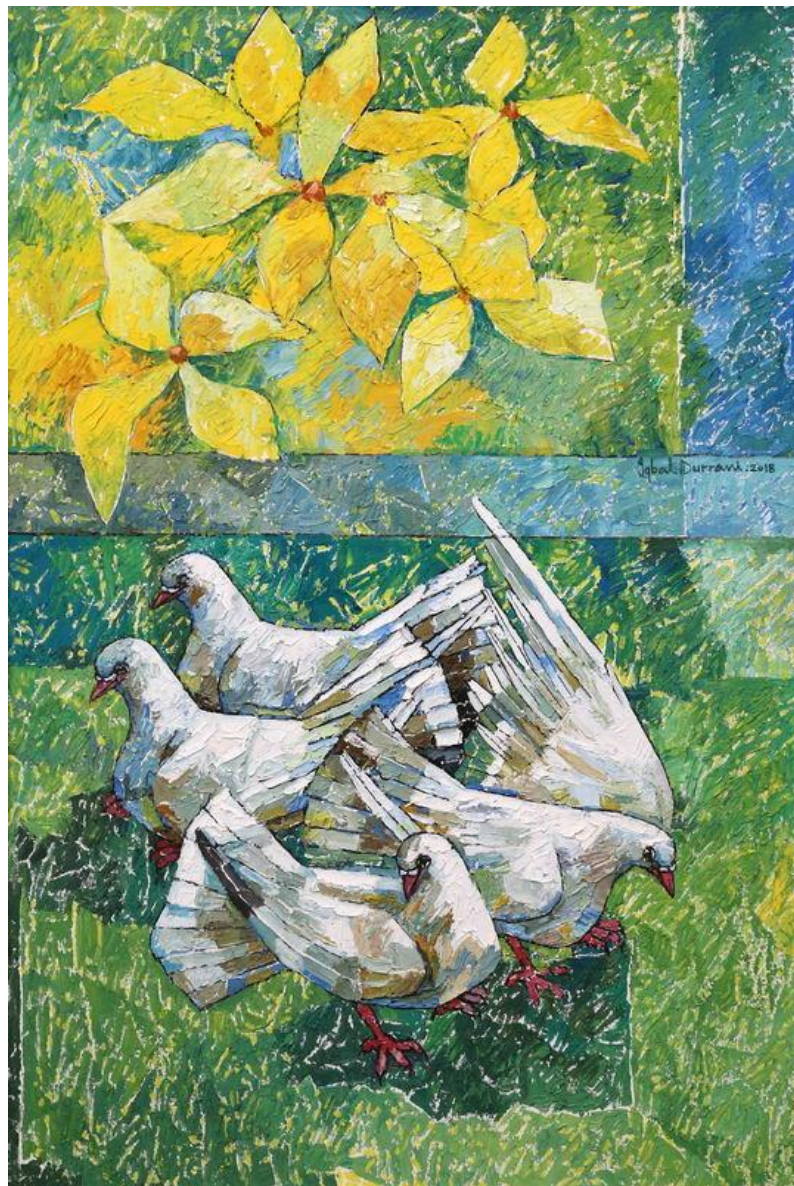
Floral Vanity, 24 x 30 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-080, Rs. 115,000 (\$827.34)





Alluring Lover, 24 x 36 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-066, Rs. 135,000 (\$971.22)





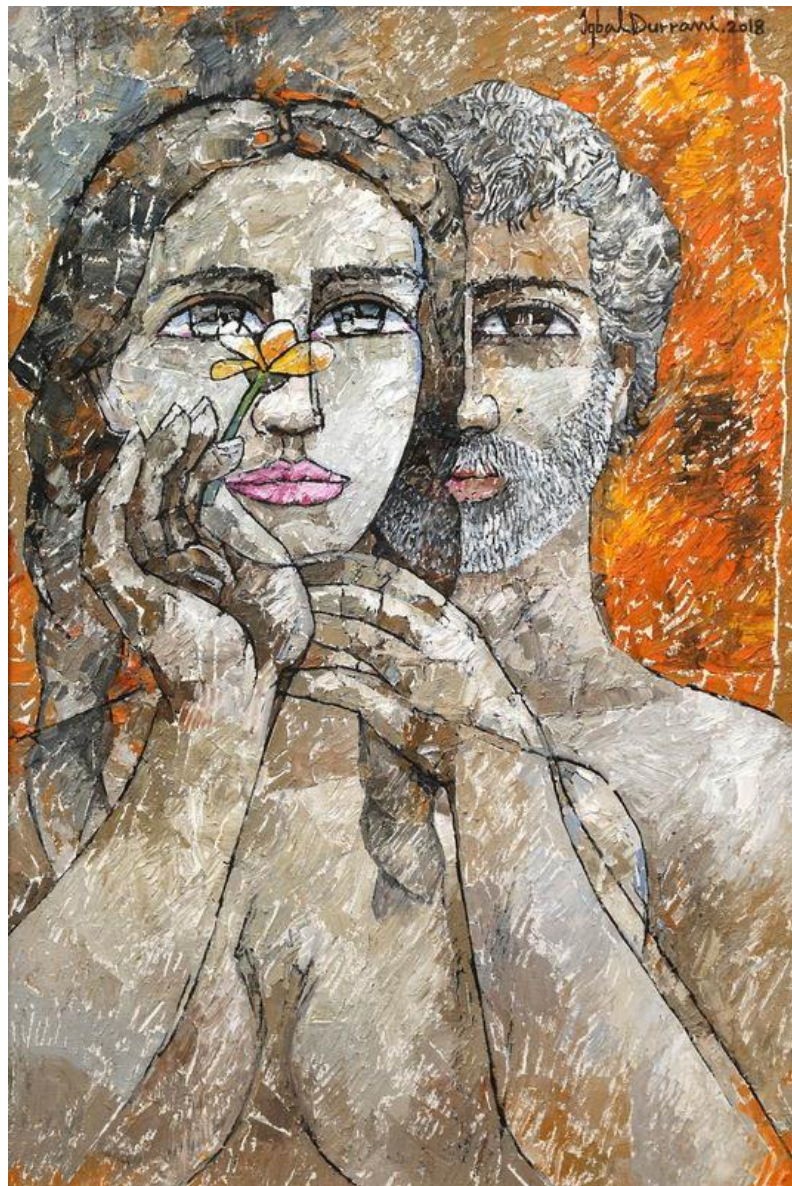
Reflections of Gold, 24 x 36 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-099, Rs. 135,000 (\$971.22)





Expression of Emotion, 24 x 36 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-078, Rs. 135,000 (\$971.22)





Self Portrait - Two-way Lust, 24 x 36 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-104, Rs. 135,000 (\$971.22)





Feathered Friends, 36 x 36 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-079, Rs. 200,000 (\$1438.85)





Self Portrait - Immersed in Beauty, 36x 36 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-103, Rs. 200,000 (\$1438.85)





Nesting Companions, 36x 36 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-095, Rs. 200,000 (\$1438.85)





Intimate Gathering, 48 x 72 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-086, Rs. 600,000 (\$4316.55)





Romantic Frenzy, 48 x 72 Inch, Oil on Canvas, AC-IQD-100, Rs. 600,000 (\$4316.55)





Iqbal Durrani  
1962 Born In Karachi

- 1979 Won First Prize of "Running Trophy of Ahmed Parvez Award"
- 1980 Won again First Prize of "Running Trophy of Ahmed Pervez Award"
- 1982 Participated in group exhibition of painting Friendship House, Karachi.
- 1982 Two-men show of paintings. Pakistan Arts Council Karachi.
- 1982 Participated in group exhibition of "Artists of 4th generation". Pakistan Arts Council of Karachi.
- 1982 Solo Show, Goethe Institute Karachi.
- 1983 Won First Prize all Pakistan Calligraphy Competition, Arts Council Gallery, Karachi.
- 1984 Participated in Sindh Artists Exhibition, Karachi.
- 1985 Solo Show, Goethe Institute, Karachi.
- 1986 Solo Show, Chawkandi Gallery, Karachi.
- 1987 Solo Show, Vision Art Gallery, Karachi.
- 1988 Solo Show, Pearl Continental Art Gallery, Karachi.
- 1989 Solo Show, Art Views Gallery, Karachi.
- 1991 Solo Show, Collectors Art Gallery, Karachi.
- 1992 Solo Show, Indus Gallery, Karachi.
- 1993 Solo Show, Clifton Art Gallery, Karachi.
- 1994 Private Show, Dubai.
- 1994 Solo Show, Clifton Art Gallery, Karachi.
- 1996 One Day Private Show, Majmua, Karachi.
- 1996 Solo Show, Clifton Art Gallery, Karachi.
- 1997 Live performance with Abida Parveen for ANZ Grindlays Bank, Karachi.
- 1997 Participated in Melburn, London.
- 1997 Solo Show, Clifton Art Gallery, Karachi.
- 1999 Solo Show, Majmua The Art Gallery, Karachi. 2003 One-man show, Dubai.
- 2005 Solo Show, Malaysia and Thailand.
- 2007 Solo Show, Indus Gallery, Karachi.
- 2013 Solo Show, Creative Gallery, Karachi.
- 2015 Solo Show 'Fond Observations' at Citi Art Gallery, Karachi.
- 2015 Solo Exhibition, Creative Gallery, Karachi.
- 2018 Solo Show, Artciti Gallery, Karachi.
- 2019 Solo Show, Artciti Gallery, Karachi.



## Untamed, Raw Beauty

Using nothing more than the raw strokes of a palette knife, Iqbal Durrani paints rich and surreal artworks demonstrating exquisite deftness that captivates viewers, inspires ecstasy, and daunts the prejudices of urban art. What the artist visualizes is by no means an ordinary observation, but a vision that emanates from the core of his multi-layered perception, seasoned over more than three decades. Strewn with experiences of suffering and emotional upheavals, Durrani's poignant life taught him the magical process of transforming pain into remarkable paintings in the form of women, birds and flowers.

Capturing the finest anatomical details of his subjects with a palette knife on canvas is the artist's forte which sets him apart from his contemporaries. It's a process and style that he has evolved through sincere contemplation, insight and regular painting. He prefers to mix paints on the canvas strictly using the knife while resorting to strategically employ the canvas's white gesso to his advantage. The real battle of colors begins when he starts to layer knife strokes over previously worked surfaces. It is his tamed foresight that triggers his intuition to overlay colors that cause a visual commotion which sends serene sensations through the optical portal to the cerebral depths of the observer's brain!

Durrani's immaculate compositions are reminiscent of the 17th Century Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer who precisely laid out his canvases to highlight the focal areas such as in 'Girl with a Pearl Earring'. Rendering his flawlessly composed paintings with a unique contemporary style, Durrani can be referred to as 'modern era Vermeer' who continues to look beyond the boundaries of fantasy. The thoughtful distribution of elements on the canvas, painted with specific hues, fresh and vivid, to create an impact of instant likability, is a complex instinctive performance.

In recent years, one of the utmost revelations is that Durrani, apart from oil paints, also draws in charcoal, pencil and pastel to create amazing, methodically rendered, ethereal compositions of female characters, birds and flowers. However, as a consequence of an increasing numbers of oil-aficionados, most of his time is devoted in oil painting.

Durrani believes in presenting pure human emotions for which he normally immerses himself into the painting and its emulated environment; what follows is a passionate narrative, sensitively inscribed on canvas with palette knife. It is the instinctive randomness of the strokes and color, that produces a distinctive character in Durrani's



paintings in terms of surface feel and pigment harmony. The colors are lit up vibrantly with the generous use of white, in swathes buttered across the canvas, creating an exceptional texture that has become a hallmark of the artist.

It is the artist's intention to communicate tacitly with the audience through his artworks which speak in a universal language of visual allegories. Though it is difficult to achieve the said visual interaction, but Durrani has successfully established a vocabulary which he deploys to convey diverse messages. It is with a sober panache that he interweaves seductive intimacies within his subjects, thus, radiating a mysterious enticement and lure. A gradual absorption of Durrani's painting engages the viewer's intellect almost involuntarily and initiates a subtle stimulus that momentarily transports the viewer to another time and dimension. It is a brief but evocative encounter with the artist's world of endearing characters that somewhat relate to the viewers own experiences. Each stroke of the knife, every dab of paint, each crevice and niche carries a different interpretation for different people, however, the drama of each inference, remains unpredictable but sensational.

The stories that Durrani narrates with his faithful knife and raw oil paint are compelling and aggressive at the same time, and represent work of an intelligent and desperate artist. His art is lively and mesmerizing which leaves a deep impact on the viewers, hauling them out of their environment and taking them on a journey to savor the surreal world of delusion. His boldly rich but provocative paintings of young urban women are tempting and lascivious, yet somehow uplifting and complex in theme. Combined with feathered creatures and blossoming flowerets, the eye-catching montage depicts numerous soothing interpolations.

An important expertise of the artist is his visceral and raw style which enables him to start with a direct sketch on the canvas - a impromptu manner which few artists choose to adopt. This gives his work an unmistakable spontaneity which is a key element, while it also triggers the artist's premonition to creatively steer his painting. The dynamics of evolving impulsively, yields exceptional results that are unique and inimitable. The artist describes his imaginative technique, as '*a rush of energy and equilibrium of spontaneous activities*'.

**Saeed Kureshi**  
Sitara-e-Imtiaz  
Art Critic



## Candid Revelations of Iqbal Durrani

Painting for the artist is all about developing an insight to probe his inner soul and depict how it resonates with the environment. What Iqbal Durrani paints is the responsiveness that he feels through sensitivity to material and spiritual elements around him. Consequently, he reveals a candid reflection of his inner self recounting pure definitions of life's experiences which boast inescapable empathy for the viewers.

The seasoned work of Durrani has advanced into a powerful technique which gives him the liberty to express human emotions in countless ways. His knife work is both forceful and sensitive at the same time whereby he tackles the most challenging subjects with immaculate skill. However, the most important aspect of Durrani's paintings remains to be the engrossing drama and impact that he creates with his unique palette of colors.

Last year's exhibition (Artciti 2018) of Durrani was definitely a worthy set of works, nevertheless, the current paintings for exhibition that I have seen are definitely a notch higher in their concept and presentation. I find this remarkable collection of works refreshing and brimming with inspirational nuances!

**Ustad Bashir Ahmed**

Former Principal & Head of Fine Arts  
National College of Arts



## IQBAL DURRANI : A COMRADE AMONGST FRIENDS

It is more than a decade that I met Iqbal Durrani for the first time at a public function in Karachi. In just a few days we had developed a profound acquaintance based on some common equestrian and aesthetic interests. Being a diehard art lover myself, I was surprised and excited to find out that Durrani was a serious painter who enjoyed a distinctive place in Karachi's art milieu. With a brimming urge to see his work, I requested if I could visit his home to see his paintings, and he gladly invited me. Only when I saw Durrani's paintings did I realize that I was in the company of an artist par excellence.

Durrani's paintings reflect a certain charisma of the old masters. In his art, you will not find any pretense of 'being a response to the current socio-political environment or his surroundings' — a common theme across artists who look for inspiration outside themselves. Durrani is different — art comes from inside him, and is indifferent to pain and suffering that surrounds us all. His art adds beauty to the environment, and makes pain of the human suffering more bearable.

Over the last 10 years, I imbibed Durrani's work through personal interaction with him at his studio, visiting art galleries and acquisition of some of his unique works. I was fortunate to be a witness to the evolvement of his theme and technique which to this day has an exclusive identity. Flowers, pigeons and female figures continue to be his central subjects, but the softness of his brush-work, over the years, has gradually shifted towards thick layers of paint almost sculpted with exquisite knife-work. Over the period, his preferred color palette widened from whites, smoky greys, and browns... to light blues and purples. And most recently, I have seen an onslaught of bold Oranges, Greens and Golds worked beautifully into his paintings.

Durrani's work is appealing to any viewer, but it takes someone with an eye-for-art to truly appreciate the inimitable technical side of his work. Initially it was the rough and ripped edge effects, which have now transformed into network of slivers of blank canvas that become part of the painting itself. In his most recent work, the textures have transformed into an almost ethereal mosaic of vivid colors.

Let me now write about my experiences with Durrani as a friend. Initially, he gives an impression of an arrogant aristocrat and 'in your face' type person, who will not hesitate for a moment in speaking his mind, and putting anyone in their rightful place. But once you get to know him, underneath the ostensibly snooty persona he is a very sensitive person who has gone through more than his share of poignant vicissitudes of life. As a consequence, he



eagerly shares his honest advice with those he considers his friends. His advice may initially seem harsh, but over the long run, I have personally experienced his advice to be the best I have received from anyone. Professionally, I am associated with the world of finance, and even in my area of expertise, I have benefited more from his raw readings of economic cycles, than from those of so-called financial gurus and pundits.

Durrani truly cares about people close to him, and those he chooses to considers his friends. I am witness to the two years he spent taking care of his ailing mother, literally standing by her bedside day and night. He was already considered one of the few senior Pakistani artists still producing work – yet his work was the furthest from his heart during this painful time. However, once the painful period had passed – I also witnessed his extreme work ethic where he would continuously work for greater part of the day, for months on end to prepare the body of work for his next exhibition. We have spent many evenings in his studio discussing the daily drivel of life, as Jagjeet's ghazals played in the background and flames from his collection of antique lamps cast flickering shadows on the paintings surrounding us. These sessions full of laughter and deep spiritual / philosophical discussions are treasured moments for me.

I look forward to enjoying his friendship for many years to come, and to see him rise beyond his current recognition into the best Pakistani artist of this era.

**Ali Alvi**

Art Connoisseur/Collector

Karachi



## **ABOUT ARTCITI:**

ARTCITI Gallery opened its doors in January of 2014 and have never looked back!!

We are an online art gallery that has grown exponentially in the last few years! We are making strides to open a window to the world for talent possessed by very gifted artists of Pakistan. We have a wide collection of more than 2,300 art pieces from over 330 artists from all over Pakistan. No other gallery in Pakistan carries such a comprehensive collection. We deliver art pieces across the world, both framed and unframed. Through hosting a vast array of original artwork and providing a choice between various styles and artists, we are proud to cater to all palates and preferences.





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