



It gives me great joy'

ES HER CAREER AND PUTTING PAKISTAN ON THE MAP

What makes a painter so collectible?

A few ingredients combine to make a painting a masterpiece. Something that has a great composition and is well-executed. Also, the concept and elements should combine to create a work that becomes much bigger than the time or the age it was conceived, painted and executed.

An example of this is the *Mona Lisa*, which was created in 1503 during the Renaissance period. It grew to be the most regarded and viewed painting historically to date. Now in the latest auction, Da Vinci's work *Salvatore Munti* has auctioned for \$450.3 million. Both masterpieces are similar. Perhaps executed at the same time, and have transcended all barriers of time, age and space. So any art that combines these elements will flourish forever.

Who are your personal favourite artistic masters?

The western old masters are the ultimate, for instance Leonardo Da Vinci. However, the impressionists and our masters of the subcontinent are in their own right great painters too.

Do you have any all-time favourite work of art?

I have some artworks that I treasure, and at the end of the day, view and breathe in my art oxygen. They are the best vitamins for relaxation. So there are quite a few, including pieces I own.

What does it take to become an art dealer?

A passion for art, plenty of understanding and regularly brushing up one's knowledge of it.

How can you tell fakes from real paintings?

That comes with experience and having a good grounding of knowledge. Like in many professions, knowledge is key.

You must be pleased your daughter Soraya is making such a huge name for herself as an artist?

I'm delighted and over the moon. She always had the potential and talent, and a little grooming has transformed her.

What do you most love about her work?

Soraya's concepts, treatment, originality and the final outcome. She has done something new with landscape painting. It is a fresh approach and pioneering style that has created international news.

How much do you two work together and exchange ideas?

Soraya Sikander co-curates with me at Unicorn Gallery's Lahore branch. We conceptualise exhibitions, work on thematic shows, plan, research and implement original and engaging art exhibitions.

Which upcoming Pakistani artists should we look out for?

My favourite artist was Tassaduq So-hail, who unfortunately died. However, I like the contemporaries like Soraya. But the others are becoming more unaffordable like Shahzia Sikander, Imran Qureshi, M Ali Talpur and Aqeel Solangi.

What's your greatest unfulfilled ambition?

There are some Pakistani old master artists dating back to pre-partition. I would like to host their retrospective as well as write on their art as there is limited material.

What inspires you?

Any good work of art will inspires me.

Why do you love art?

Art has given the world so much and will continue to do so for centuries to come. It has also given me so much and become like a second instinct for me.

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'It's like a second instinct'



ART ATTACK: Seemah Niaz; and (left, top to bottom) the Unicorn gallery, with her artist daughter Soraya Sikander; and looking at art work

Priya Mulji



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The best and worst year

SO, THIS year has been really rubbish but also amazing. Let's get the negatives out of the way first though. My dad had heart surgery (but he's made an amazing recovery so thank god for that).

I was also involved in a car crash where my lovely Fiat 500 got written off and I was literally bruised from head to toe. Nine bruises, people, nine! But I am alive and well. Cars will come and go, but being alive does not.

I'm also very single, but what is new there? Earlier this year I also wasn't in the best place, but I got help and I'm much happier now. Let's leave boys aside for this column though. I always moan about them and we don't want any of that!

I want to tell you all about what I am thankful for this year. I have the most supportive family. Thank you to my family for always being there. I have a job that allows me to hit the gym first thing in the morning and park at work (unheard of in London). If I need to change my hours, there's no issue; so thank you work.

I also travelled to some amazing places; Amsterdam is the prettiest place ever, Seville was my first solo trip (but not last) and I visited Valencia for the second time.

One major aspect of my life I am really thankful for is my friend circle. I am truly, happily, genuinely so grateful for those friends I have around me. I might sound biased in this, but I truly have the best friends.

When I had my accident, my friends Rita and her husband Keevan were at my side during the whole ordeal. I cannot ever say thank you enough for this Rita and Keevan, you are not just friends, but family.

In the strangest circumstances, I also got closer with a male friend this year. They say women and men can't be friends, and possibly this is a friend of convenience. Perhaps if each of us didn't live alone, near each other, if we weren't single and moody, we would not be friends. We may irritate the hell out of each other, but I know I can count on him. I can't take his name, but thank you and you know who you are. And don't worry I'll be using your dad joke in the future!

I wish I could name each and every friend of mine including those who bought me food, danced to silly Bollywood songs with me, who took me shopping when I was without a car, and indulged me in my snack and Saravana Bhavan love. I love you all as much as I love the people above. So thank you.

Here's to an even better 2018 for each and every one of you out there. I'll leave you with a quote from Helen Keller: "Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties."