

TESTIMONIAL 1992-2007

Testimonial 1992 –2007 is one of the many statements that I have commented on and will continue addressing on and beyond the Partitioning of the Indian Subcontinent, the disputes that took place and the events that exist to date, which led up to its breakup into several Nation States and its effect on National and International politics.

My artistic process consists of several perspectives that demand considerable research in different countries in the form of text, photography, performance, film, sound, and periodically into its final conclusion as Installation art, (early man's very first attempt to create the world around themselves in caves).

I chose to be self-referential and begin with my personal her story which was informed by my readings into feminist theory because of my families' initial involvement in the freedom movement as active and inactive participants that forced them into exile into Europe and Asia due to the circumstances of history. I lent myself to discovering over a period of time that in order to research at a grass root level, a collective oral history as a requirement of one of my processes. I would involve large communities of people to assist with my research. Simultaneously, I would reciprocate by participating on their own terms to produce diversified bodies of work within their own communities as an essentialists approach.

In this particular piece that I chose to exhibit here in Pakistan I am attempting to contextualize some of my concerns, although aspects of this piece have been exhibited elsewhere in differing formats. Among the different media I have worked with over the years, bookmaking has been a constant and central part of my artistic process. It is whilst I lived in the Middle East, in this ancient cradle

of civilization, where the three monotheistic religions took root that I assembled these large-scale books. A substantial body of work has been re-worked and condensed into large-scale Western style codex book formats rather than the Eastern Palm leaf book as I chose to read my images from right to left and archived through the written word, photocopies, drawings, maps and photographs which I proceeded to sandwich between steel covers recording those absences and presences as memories that foretell of recurring historical events much as a diarist does merely to enter my own voluminous archive as I continue to play with the notion of the visible and the invisible, which not only attends to my gender but also to the subtleties of State polity as yet another unlearned lesson of history for scholarly discussion at some point.

The image as hidden and largely inaccessible but with possibilities of revelation provided a considerable physical effort is made exists yet is that the artists intention? Perhaps, not at all, considering that an abundance of images bombard our minds either through the media or on a street level. Can one add anything to what already exists in one form or another?

An indication of the weight of history becomes visible with the material presence of the substances utilized in creating the 3D objects that enclose the 2D pages addressing universal concerns of history, mythology and time.

A method I was aware of that the contemporary German artist Anselm Kiefer incorporated within his work as did prior to him the medieval artists working away in monasteries to produce their illuminated and hand written large scale books.

The interplay between the 2D page and 3D object the book is a constant in every one's life as knowledge.

References are made to cultural objects that immediately inform the viewer of its antecedents whether it is a rahl (stand), book, cage or shelving units to slot absences within a presence.

I cannot fail to acknowledge that as an artist I enter the legions of chroniclers when I chose to reflect and comment on a particular series of events in any given century in the name of civilization on issues of mankind's battles to exert his rule of order, the empowerment of women in Nationalists struggles and their subsequent disempowerment once the struggle is over, mass executions for sectarian or religious reasons, wanton destruction leading to their displacement and migration into the diasporas amongst others which culminates in man's relentless desire to reconstruct on its ruins only to repeat that cycle of events yet again.