

SHAHKAAR JOURNALS

By Sumaya Durrani

Introduction Part 1

Shahkaar Research Hub draws on the illustrious Urdu literary journal *Shahkaar* (1934) published during the first half of the 20th Century in British India. *Shahkaar* was founded and edited by *Shams ul Ulema*, *Baleegh ul Mulk*, Professor Allama Ehsanullah Khan Tajwar Najibabadi (1894 -1951). *Shahkaar*'s circulation originated in Lahore, a city with a history that is traced back to the ancient metropolis of Western Punjab that thrived along the River Ravi in approximately 2000 BC. *Shahkaar*'s rapid distribution extended across the cultural hubs of British India, including Western Punjab, Central India, Utter Pradesh, and the South, encompassing Hyderabad, Patna, Bihar, and Madras in the period spanning from 1935 to 1951. *Shahkaar* was ranked among the foremost proponents of what was widely acknowledged as the golden era of Urdu literary journalism in India which emerged from the Ganga Jumna belt and spread across the Empire. Among the publications integral to this movement were Delhi's *Saqi* and *Tanwir*, Lucknow's *Farogh-e-Urdu*, Agra's *Naqab*, Bhopal's *Afkar* and *Jaadah*, Patna's *Subh-e-Nao* and *Maasir*, Hyderabad's *Sabras* and *Saba*, and Bombay's *Asia*, *Shair*, *Nawa-e-Adab*, and *Naya Adab*. However, the preeminent centre of this literary movement was Lahore from where both *Shahkaar* and *Adabi Dunya* by Allama Tajwar were published in addition to *Nairang-e-Khayyal*, *Humayun*, *Alamgir*, *Savera*, and *Adab-e-Latif*.



Sumaya Durrani is Allama Tajwar Najibabadi's granddaughter. Durrani is a transdisciplinary artist - epistemologist, Sufi methodologist, decolonial theorist, dissident political ontologist, anarchist-activist and an academic with a neo-marxist bent. She locates her practice at the intersections between Doctrinal Sufism, Western Philosophy and Social Theory, Neuroscience, Postcolonial Discourse Analysis and Transdisciplinary Aesthetics. She is undertaking a Doctorate in Art at the University of New South Wales Sydney. Durrani holds a Master and Bachelor of Fine Art *Cum Laude* from the University of Michigan Ann Arbor,

subsequently extending her studies at the Sir John Cass School of Art London Metropolitan University. She has served in academic, higher executive and advisory capacities in the public and private sectors in higher education in Pakistan, Turkey and Afghanistan. Durrani was the Director General and Principal of the Pakistan Gem and Jewellery Institute, TDAP Government of Pakistan. She founded the Punjsher Foundation Postgraduate Pilot Project in Traditional Art in collaboration with Hamdard University, an academic program grounded in Islamic Sacred texts. She presently serves as the Founder - Director of Shahkaar Research Hub, Jaanbaaz, and Urdu Markaz initiatives centred around decolonial aesthetics and Sufi praxis, interfaith dialogue, transgenerational and complex trauma, structural violence and epistemicide. Durrani has served as the Pakistan Commissioner at the Asian Biennale Dhaka 1995. In recent years she was nominated for the Abraj Capital Prize at Art Dubai in 2010 and the Jameel Prize in 2015, at Victoria and Albert Museum UK. Durrani is the recipient of the UIPA Australian Award in 2012 and the First Women Bank Award in 2011. She has exhibited widely with 40 solo exhibitions and several group shows at public and private institutions in Australia, Japan, USA, Canada, Norway, France, UK, India, Nepal and Bangladesh. Her works are in the permanent National Collection of Pakistan at the NAG National Art Gallery Islamabad and at TDAP Trade Development Authority Government of Pakistan. Durrani is initiated in the Chishti, Quadri, Qalandari, Naqshbandi and Suhrawardi Sufi Orders. Her dominant spiritual persuasion is Chishti characterized by Qalandari alignments defined by a strong Hallajian bent.

Source:

Sumaya Durrani

Urdu Markaz Australia

Shahkaar Research Hub