

# Farida Batool

## Artist Statement and Biography

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### Artist Statement

In *Kahani Eik Shehr Ki* I am narrating a story of my city from different perspectives, as a protagonist, as a storyteller. I walk along different roadsides of Lahore, to tell a story through the brief momentous interaction with people and the visual imagery found around me. The juxtaposition of the images helps to construct a complex and multilayered narrative, framing citizens within significant markers of the city presented through the banality of everyday life.

An array of events are experienced during the act of walking, from the simple mundane sight of parked cars to noisy rickshaws closely passing by the crowded bazaar. A faithful crowd moves towards an eminent mosque while on the other hand I encounter ordinary people staring back while some oblivious of my actions. I pass by the secured barred gates of Lahore High Court, buzzing around with hundreds of lawyers. Running parallel to its boundary the footpath is ornamented with stalls of old wall clocks, diaries, clothes frugally displayed by vendors. Peeping from the back of these items are chalk writings, torn political and religious posters, coincidentally side-by-side with advertisements for army recruits. These appear next to the sale of precious land, and this not only points towards the relationship of the state with its citizens but also elucidates consumer culture. Other walls show radical graffiti by religious extremists groups offering calls for Jihad, invoking sectarian sentiments that are ironically layered with advertisement of products enhancing male sexuality. The omnipresence of security guards, barricades and open gates outside government institutions, blue containers skirting visa offices reflects the vulnerability of the city.

The layered images are often related to the notion of memory or history, with the 'earlier' image partially erased but still constitutive of the 'later' image in order to portray contrasting realities.

Note: The movement of the walk is created through optical illusion, a hallmark of lenticular technique, which allows several layers of images to change along the movement of the viewer. Numerous images are interlaced and mounted behind a lenticular lens, acting like a prism. An optical illusion of the movement is created on a two-dimensional photographic surface. The total effect of the movement created by optical illusion work is difficult to document/capture on a still photographic format.

## **Artist Biography**

### **Farida Batool** **Pakistan**

Lahore based visual artist and researcher in visual culture, Farida currently heads the Department of Communication and Cultural Studies, National College of Arts, her alma mater since 1993. In 2003, she completed Master by Research in Art History and Theory from University of New South Wales, Australia, and then enrolled in a PhD program in 2008 in Media and Film Studies at SOAS, University of London, with a thesis title "New Media, Masculinity and Mujra Dance in Pakistan". She travelled extensively and presented papers and presentations at Oxford University, UK; Jawaharlal Nehru University, India; Itau Cultural, Sao Paulo, Brazil; UNESCAP Jordan; UNIFEM Bangladesh; and published a book, Figure: the Popular and Political in Pakistan, 2004.

Solo exhibitions includes, Kahani eik shehr ki, Rohtas 2, Lahore 2012; Love in the Time of Cholera, Canvas Gallery, Karachi 2009; Maa Tujhe Salaam, Aicon Gallery, New York, 2009; Lahore My Love, Rohtas 2, Lahore 2008, The Blink, Rohtas 2, Lahore 2006.

Selected group shows includes Where three dreams cross: 150 years of photography, Whitechapel Gallery, London 2010; Forces, Portimao Museum, Algrave, Portugal 2009; Tradition, Technique, Technology II, Aicon Gallery, Palo Alto, USA 2008; Circanvalcao, Portugal, 2005; Beyond Borders: Art from Pakistan, National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai, India 2004; Interstation: Artists Beyond Boundaries, Kudos Gallery, Sydney, Australia 2003; Cairo Biennale, Egypt 1995.